Participatory Research and Evaluation

EXPERIMENTS IN RESEARCH AS A PROCESS OF LIBERATION

Edited by
WALTER FERNANDES
and
RAJESH TANDON

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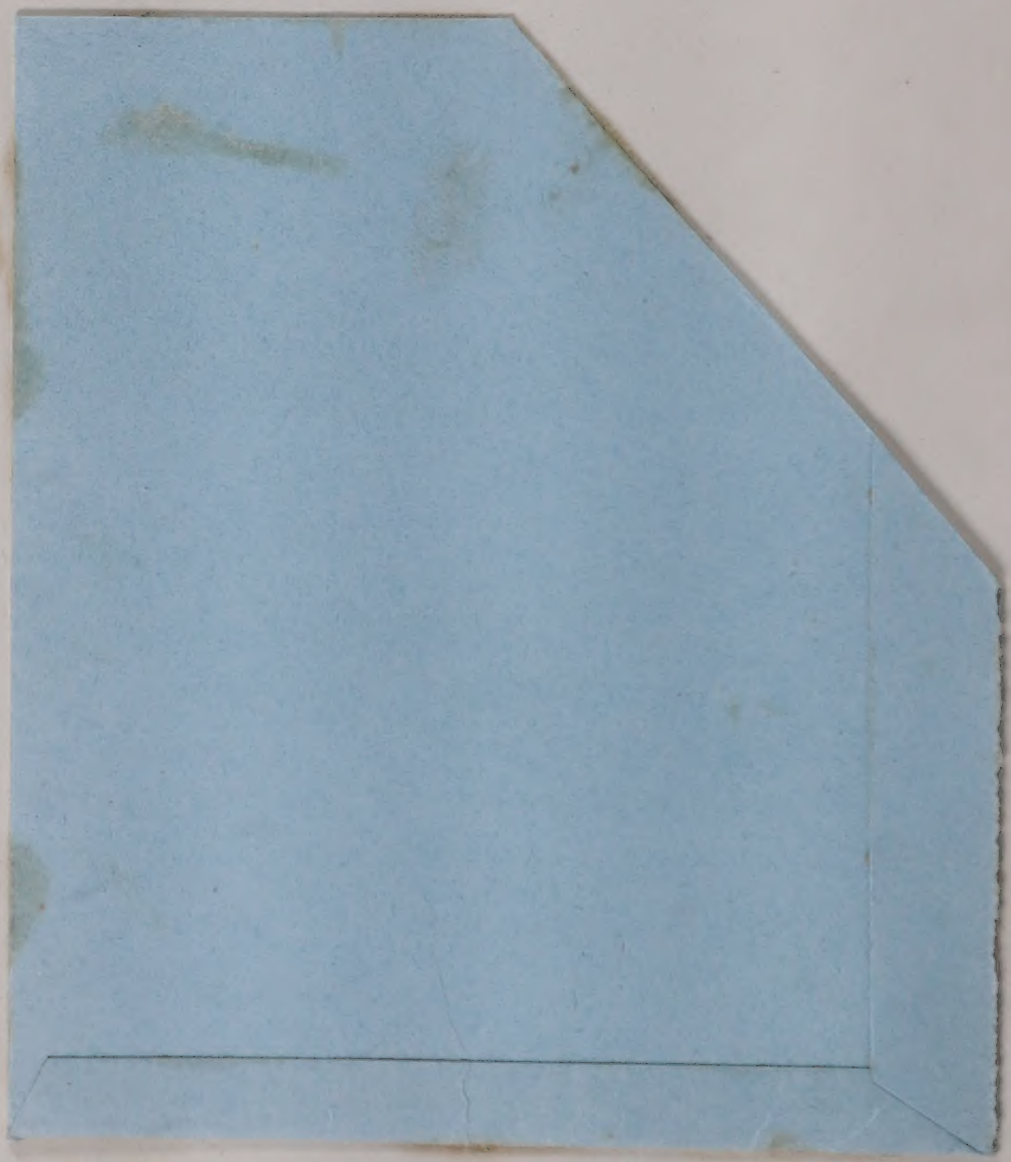

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PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Experiments in Research as a Process of Liberation

Edited by
Walter Fernandes
and
Rajesh Tandon

Indian Social Institute
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For the Oppressed and those who
suffer for being one with them

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New Delhi
September 1981

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Contents

	page
Contributors	*ix*
WALTER FERNANDES AND RAJESH TANDON Social Research for Social Action! An Introduction	1
Thereotical Perspectives	
1. RAJESH TANDON Participatory Evaluation and Research: Main Concepts and Issues	15
2. WALTER FERNANDES Nature of People's Participation in Development: Role of Voluntary Organisations	35
3. VIJI SRINIVASAN The Methodology of Participatory Evaluation	65
4. KISHORE SAINT Liberative Communication for True Participation	83
5. DESMOND A. D'ABREO Training for Participatory Evaluation	93
6. VANDANA SHIVA AND JAYANTO BANDYOPADHYAY Participatory Research and Technology Assessment by the People	109
Case Studies	
7. ASHOK DYALCHAND AND M. IBRAHIM SONI From Dais' Training to Women's Organisation: The Pachod Health Programme	127
8. LAKSHMI KRISHNAMURTHY Exploding Myths: The Participants Evaluate	151

9. MANOHAR SINGH
Literacy to Development: The Growth of a Tribal Village 162

10. MICHAEL VAN DEN BOGAERT, SAROJ BHAGAT AND NARENDRA BAHADUR BAM
Participatory Evaluation of an Adult Education Programme 172

11. SELWYN MUKKATH AND SUJATHA de MAGRY
External Agents as Facilitators: Participatory Process among Tribals and in an Institution 183

Conclusion: Statement of the Workshop on Participatory Evaluation 199

Select Bibliography 202

Index 206

Social Research for Social Action: An Introduction

W. Fernandes and R. Tandon

Though claims are made about the objective and value-free nature of social research, in reality, oftener than not it leads to some form of social action, sometimes aimed at questioning the *status quo* and usually by maintaining it. In fact, social research and social action are similar and interdependent. Both entail human activity within a given human setting and feed each other. Social research is allied with social action though it may not always lead to it directly while social action is invariably based on some research. One can argue that even coercive and repressive social action entails a certain data-base as is evident from the deeds of investigative and police agencies all over the world. Studies have shown how aggressive marketing practices of multinational corporations, exploitation of the Third World markets and over-pricing are based on extensive research of their market potential and methods of making a given product acceptable to the consumer i.e., creating a need that does not really exist.[1]

Apart from feeding one another, there is another common feature between traditional research and development-related social action. Both of them are top-down i.e., initiative is taken

[1]Charles Medawar, *Insult or Injury? An Enquiry into the Marketing and Advertising of British Food and Drug Products in India and Malaysia* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1981), pp. 40-46, 53-55 etc.

by the scholar in the case of research and by the bureaucratic decision-maker in the case of the development infrastructure. While the commercial, especially multinational, enterprises succeed in creating a need and selling their products since they aim at reaching a very small section of the population that can afford to buy their goods, the government-sponsored 'delivery systems' meant for the 'small man' have not reached the most needy. In fact, most of their benefits have been cornered by those who already had something.

> Largely because of the elitist metropolitan model of development adopted by the Five Year Plans in India, with the concentration of investment and resources in the industrial or modern sector, there is a dual economy with dichotomous relationships between the urban and rural sectors, and, within the city, between the formal and informal urban sectors. This dual relationship may be conceptualised, as Wiebe does, in terms of a model of dominance and dependency but modified by certain patterns of reciprocity that function to the advantage of the urban poor within the overall framework of inequality and subordination.[2]

What is said here about the urban sector can be applied much more forcefully to the rural areas where a few landholding castes have been able to get most benefits of the 'delivery system'. One of the reasons for this is the type of research and evaluation systems that go into building up or modifying the infrastructure. Both can be called top-down: research or evaluation whose need is felt by the policy-maker and are based on a conceptual framework that aims at 'objectivity' which essentially involves distance between the people and the evaluator.[3]

After three decades of policy-maker-oriented development effort supported by scholar-oriented research, field workers as well as researchers are beginning to realise that knowledge thus generated has not resulted in removing poverty. Moreover, many scholars question the very concept of objectivity in social research. Some of them feel that

[2]Alfred de Souza, 'The Challenge of Urban Poverty: An Introduction,' in Alfred de Souza (ed.), *The Indian City: Poverty, Ecology and Urban Development* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978), pp. xvi-xvii.

[3]Gunnar Myrdal, *Objectivity in Social Research* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1970), pp. 3-5.

> there is an inescapable *a priori* element in all scientific work. Questions must be asked before answers can be given. The questions are all expressions of our interest in the world; they are at bottom valuations. Valuations are thus necessarily involved already at the stage when we observe facts and carry on theoretical analysis, and not only at the stage when we draw political inferences from facts and valuations.[4]

This book tries to tackle some of the questions arising out of this questioning among Indian development workers and researchers. Those who are unhappy with the traditional system because its outcome has been mostly scholarly papers that have led to little change are experimenting with alternative systems. This book brings together many such theoretical papers as well as case studies presented at a workshop on Participatory Evaluation, held at Ranchi in March 1981. The papers ask some fundamental questions about research itself and view people's participation in development and evaluation as essential if the obstacles to the growth of the weakest sections are to be removed. Research is viewed no more as an 'objective study' but as a process of liberation which begins with faith in the people and in their capacity to take their own decisions. The experiments in alternatives to the present system begin with the assumption that

> the rural poor are 'voiceless' not because they have nothing to say, but because nobody cares to listen to them. More fundamentally, they constitute the silent majority because they have no 'say' in the decision-making structures of society. In this perspective it is legitimate to say that development begins with listening to the people. To accept this in actual practice is not easy, even for voluntary agencies in development.[5]

The main question scholars ask about the present research methods and the type of social action concern *distribution of power*, the assumptions about what constitutes *critical resources*, and linked to the above two and yet distinct in some way, the

[4]Gunnar Myrdal, *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), Preface pp. xv-xvi.

[5]H. Volken, 'An Experience of a Training Team in Rural India,' in *Moving Closer to the Rural Poor: Shared Experiences of the Mobile Orientation and Training Team* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1979), p. 21.

question of *control*. Moreover, there are questions concerning *technology* of social action or research, the type of personnel required and their *training* and finally, measurement of the *outcome*. The section on 'theoretical perspectives' has tried to tackle most of these questions.

(*a*) *Distribution of Power*

One of the most visible characteristics of traditional research is the remarkably skewed power distribution between the researchers and the so-called 'subject'. The researcher has complete power to decide upon the focus, methods and outcomes of his study.[6] Similarly, top-down social action efforts are, almost by definition, characterised by concentration of power at the top. The elite decide what social action is good for the 'ignorant' masses, the strategies to make them known and methods to implement them. An analysis of most development projects in the 'Third World' would bear this out. Take for example, the 'Green Revolution'. This social action effort was conceived by the elites in the governments of the developing countries, mostly in consultation with their counterparts in the rich countries and international agencies. The farmers in the developing countries had relatively little power in the entire effort though the better off among them reaped its benefits, and of course, other sections of rural society, like the landless labourers, were completely ignored and in many cases their situation deteriorated.[7]

One may add that the 'Green Revolution' and other top-down programmes were fed and supported by massive traditional research carried out in agricultural and other research institutes of rich countries and their counterparts in the developing countries. The launching of these programmes, in their turn, created major funding opportunities for further support of traditional research in these institutions and generated a mutually supportive cycle of traditional research and top-down social action.[8]

[6]M. Brenner and P. Marsh, *The Social Contexts of Methods* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

[7]Francine R. Franckel, *India's Green Revolution—Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 13-15, 24-26 etc.

[8]Sudhir Sen, *A Richer Harvest—New Horizons for Developing Countries* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp. 45-49.

In the very first paper, Tandon questions the assumptions of traditional research and social action, and the myths accompanying the 'objective' approach which assumes that human beings can be treated as objects of research just as the natural sciences deal with inanimate matter, plants or animals. Apart from the false assumptions about the possibility of such an objectivity, there is the ethical question of the distribution of power and the control exercised by a small minority over the 'silent majority' and the domination-dependency situation that ensues.

The alternative suggested by papers in this book is participatory social research and action which imply horizontal distribution of power. It means that power is the central theme of participation and that participatory social action entails widely shared, collective power by those who are considered beneficiaries. The people become agents of social action and the power differentials between those who control and need resources is reduced through participation. "It must be accepted therefore that the struggle for people's participation implies an attempted redistribution of both control of resources and of power in favour of those who live by their own productive labour."[9]

(b) Critical Resources

Resources are another source of power and control. Both traditional research and top-down social action efforts rely heavily on resources external to the social setting they are focusing upon. In the case of research, the external scholar is the critical resource and no attempt is made to utilise the local people except as 'objects' of study whose results may be used by the decision-makers to further manipulate and silence this 'silent majority'.

Similarly, top-down social action projects, be they state-led or voluntary, rely heavily on external expertise, capital, know-how and equipment. In the case of the Green Revolution, for example, massive external inputs in the form of high-yielding seeds, fertilizers, implements like tractors and credit were critical resources and little effort was made to supplement them with internal inputs, leave alone build upon what was locally available.[10]

[9]A. Pearse and M. Stiefel, *Inquiry into Participation* (Geneva: UNRISD Discussion Paper, 1979), p. 5.

[10]Francine R. Franckel, *India's Political Economy 1947-1977—The Gradual Revolution* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 270-281.

An immediate result of these external inputs is heavy dependence on external personnel and neglect of the local brains. An example of such a situation is a World Bank Research Project in Egypt. In 1979, only two out of the six principal investigators were Egyptian, the rest being 'high standing World Bank officials with the required expertise and research experience. None of the five advisers comes from Egypt.'[11] Another example is a leprosy eradication project in a province of an East African country. 45% of the annual budget went for supporting eight European personnel, 22% on supporting 60 African personnel and only 1.5% on drugs.[12] A glowing example of external resources obtaining criticality!

Hence the question: what is the role of the external agent? The top-down system seems to lead to domination-dependency relations and accentuation of inequalities. Most papers in this book try to tackle this question. Fernandes studies the nature of people's participation in development and the role the external resources (personnel, institutions, funds, technology etc.) play in facilitating or hindering people's participation. Most case studies, especially the one of Mukkath and de Magry, try to study this aspect.

Most papers also try to understand the problem of control in research, training and the implementation of programmes. D'Abreo shows the role of training in building self-confidence among people. Fernandes shows how subtle modes of control can continue even within a programme that seems to involve the people fully. Saint tackles the problem of control of communication and the need of identifying and re-valorising popular systems of communication if there has to be total participation by the people. Dyal Chand and Soni show how illiterate women can grow into a viable organisation if their culture, modes of communication and techniques are respected and efforts made to build upon what they already have through their participation. The case studies by Singh as well as the Bero evaluation by Bogaert *et al.* give examples of how people have grown as a

[11]Marjorie Mbilinyi *et al.*, *The Politics of Research Methodology in Social Sciences* (Morogoro, (Tanzania): Lead paper at the African Regional Workshop on Participatory Research, July 1-7, 1979), p. 31.

[12]Glyn Roberts, *Questioning Development* (London: Returned Volunteer Action, 1977), p. 19.

result of an on-going process of action-reflection-action which started with faith in the people. Krishnamurthy examines the myths on which most top-down projects are based and further substantiates Saint's claim that the villagers evaluate all the external inputs and accept only what they consider rational.

All these achievements were made possible because the catalysts began with faith in the people and a belief that ordinary people can solve most of their developmental problems by utilising skills, experiences and available local resources. External resources play only a supportive role and are no more a source of domination and control.

(*c*) *Technology*

Both traditional research and the GNP-centred development pattern depend on expensive and sophisticated technology. Research methods take western models for granted. Apart from ethno-centrism underlying such an approach, one tends to agree with Mbilinyi *et al.* when they say:

> As research has become subordinated to the interests of capital, increasingly capital-intensive techniques have developed in the social sciences. The application of mathematics to social science research in the form of statistical analysis is highly identified with computer analysis. In turn, such techniques demand large scale endeavours involving large sample populations and highly efficient (cost-saving) techniques of data collection, with the questionnaire format (including rating and ranking scales) being the most common techniques world-wide.[13]

One consequence of this sophistication is that what is called advanced technology has gone out of reach of the poor countries and as a result they have to depend on the universities, foundations and governments of rich countries, thus continuing expert-control of peoples and domination-dependency situation between countries and between groups within a country. Training of Third World personnel in the rich countries perpetuates this situation. What Kaplan says about Latin America is probably true also about the rest of the Third World. He claims that American 'influence has been brought to bear through the training

[13]Mbilinyi *et al.*, *op. cit.* p. 5.

of professionals, teachers and research workers in the United States, through joint research projects implemented in that country and in Latin America and through the financing of national and regional centres.'[14]

Shiva and Bandyopadhyay discuss the consequences of this situation on local knowledge and technology. They show how acceptance of the concept of modernisation can be fatal to centuries-old knowledge and resources which are often irreplaceable. They also discuss cases of popular movements that began with knowledge available among the people. However, given that the anti-people policies are formulated by those who understand only the language of macro-research, they insist on the need of subsuming popular knowledge in the language of the decision-makers not in order to support these decisions and find ways of making them acceptable as scholars have often done, but in order to change these anti-people policies. Such elitist policies are the result of the decision-makers' attitudes. Most of them think of people only as recipients of aid and are not prepared to accept the possibility of genuine knowledge among them.

> The European discovered illness among the tribesmen and had an immediate line of thought: CURE—bring in hospitals, pharmacies, medical schools...He came across illiteracy but thought: EDUCATE—build primary schools, secondary schools, universities...He found men drinking palm wine, with several wives and shamelessly naked: he decided to SAVE: establish mission stations...[15]

The technology of participatory social action is embedded in the local context and people's models of design and implementation. In other words, participatory research and action affect both the type of technology and the methodology of evaluation as well as action, as Srinivasan points out in her paper. As Shiva and Bandyopadhyay insist, the technology of such action is small and appropriate and is built upon what has come down over the centuries. The cases mentioned by them, as well as those of the Pachod programme, the Madhya

[14] Marcos Kaplan, 'The Vulnerability of Social Science Research in Latin America,' in E. Crawford & S. Rokkan (eds.), *Sociological Praxis* (London: Sage, 1976), p. 151.

[15] Glyn Roberts, *op. cit.* p. 19

Pradesh tribals and the Working Women's Forum illustrate the effectiveness of such an approach. These and other cases such as the training methodology mentioned by D'Abreo and the modes of communication elaborated upon by Saint show that while participatory social action entails small and relevant technology, it is also based on modes of change which are evolved by the participants.

(*d*) *Outcome*

The major difference between the traditional and participatory approaches is seen in their outcome. Unlike the traditional approach which is concerned with quantitative outcomes and goal-directed action, participatory research gives greater importance to qualitative data and process-oriented action. The success of research is seen no more in publications in 'reputed' journals but in what happens during the process of research. Similarly, the outcomes of participatory social action are no more measured as in the top-down approach, in quantitative, aggregate terms like per capita income, GNP, birth and death rates. When there is genuine people's participation, the outcomes concern human beings in qualitative terms. It is a process of growth as a community and would lead to people's organisation in some form or the other.

Self-confidence is another important outcome of some participatory social action efforts. The Scheduled Caste women of Pachod or the Bhil tribals of Umara gained self-confidence after their participation in their own training, in wage negotiations with the contractor or in working together.

Linked to self-confidence and awareness is the educational outcome of participatory social action. The participants of such an effort learn new ways of perceiving reality and acting on it. The Chipko or Bedthi movements are examples of a new type of education taking place among persons who are ordinarily considered ignorant. This action, if followed by proper reflection, can bring about collective empowerment and strength for future actions, as most case studies show.

In other words, the final outcome of participatory research is participatory action which is characterised by an equal distribution of power, reliance on local resources, continued control

by the people, small and locally evolved technology, and processual, qualitative, human outcomes.

(*e*) *Micro and Macro-Research*

To the extent that what are mentioned above are important elements of the emerging paradigm of participatory and professional research at the micro and macro-levels, just as top-down social action and research go hand in hand, it is necessary that participatory social research develops characteristics that make possible its alliance with participatory social action. What is more, as the final Statement of the Workshop says, it should be made possible for traditional research to support participatory social action, by subsuming knowledge of the people to the macro-level and translating it in the language of the policy-makers.

Simultaneously, macro-researchers have to build up what some have called the social capital of local institutions, education, values and other aspects, that can enable people to gain greater control over their environment and improve their material circumstances at every crossing of 'cultural thresholds'.[16] This requires that the knowledge available to macro-researchers should be translated in the language of the common man. Thus the macro-researcher has to play the double role of subsuming popular knowledge to the professional's language in order to change policies and to translate the outcome of macro-research into popular language.

In many cases this has borne fruit. At the international level, for example, the micro-studies translated into macro-language have enabled organisations like UNICEF to realise that

> the top-heavy conventional approach to making town and country better places to live in has not gotten most of the population of the developing countries very far. Only 10% of these people have access to decent health care....This state of affairs obviously calls for something else, something that can happen now and make a big difference soon to the very many.[17]

[16]David G. Mandelbaum, 'Anthropology and Challenges of Development,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15(n. 44, November 1, 1980), p. 1899.

[17] Gordon Carter, 'The Implications of Basic Services,' *Assignment Children*, (n. 41, Jan-March, 1978), pp. 16-17.

From this re-thinking was born the concept of what are called the basic needs. However, many feel that even this approach stops at material needs and does not go far enough to solve the genuine human problems and lead to true human development.

Some others feel that far from helping the process of liberation, if the researcher is not careful, he may only enable the traditional policy-makers or vested interests to present their goods in a more attractive package without changing their substance. Paulo Freire, for example, inspired many groups in their work of liberation.

> He also attracted the attention of those agencies that were developing an educational methodology for the incorporation of the small peasant into the consumer economy under the auspices of the Integrated Rural Development Strategy. These agencies found in Freire's terminology a progressive gloss which could make their approach marketable in the Third World. By co-opting Freire's terminology and concepts, they could hope to influence the direction of political change in the Third World.[18]

While facilitating the empowerment of the marginalised groups, the macro-researcher has to counteract these efforts at co-opting by encouraging new trends and supporting genuine action.

CONCLUSION

We have seen the role and nature of traditional as well as participatory research and action. We can now comment on its implications. The foremost implication for participatory social research is its clear attempt at power equalisation, by eliminating the distinction between the researcher and the people. This power equalisation assumes that research becomes an action-reflection-action process of interaction between the outsider who functions no more as a scholar but as a catalyst, and the local people.

[18] Ross Kidd & Krishna Kumar, 'Co-opting Freire—A Critical Analysis of Pseudo-Freirean Adult Education,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 (n. 1 & 2 January 3-10,1981), pp. 27-28.

From this it follows that the critical resources in the process are the people who are capable of contributing ideas, information, insights, analysis and above all, provide the context for the inquiry. An essential result of this approach is that the control over the entire process of research and action has to be shared by the 'expert' researcher and the people, with the former playing only a supportive role to the latter.

In other words, it is essentially people's research and entails a framework that evolves from the local context and technology that is small and appropriate. Methods of data-collection and analysis should contribute towards an understanding of micro-situations in their macro-contexts.

Finally, research has to lead to action. The 'traditional and still conventional tendency in social research to be 'pseudo-objective' and to conceal the value premises in a particular approach'[19] has to give place to purposeful study geared to the people becoming change-agents. The knowledge and learning outcomes are no more confined to the researcher but shared by the people. In this notion, the criteria for evaluating outcomes are determined by the people involved in participatory research and not by any external group. This makes more complex demands on participatory research and evaluation.

Theoretical Perspectives

1

Participatory Evaluation and Research: Main Concepts and Issues[1]

Rajesh Tandon

From the days in the 1930s when the University of Bombay first introduced a post-graduate course in sociology, to our days, there has been a gradual change to professionalisation of the social sciences. With professionalisation came specialisation and its acceptance as a science that can be considered objective by creating a distance between the researcher and the 'object' of study i.e., the people studied—actors in the social setting.

What is forgotten in this classical mode of research is that this cry for objectivity is a result of the post-renaissance developments in the West, the evolutionary thinking of the late nineteenth and the rationalist schools of the early twentieth centuries, when 'modernist' thought considered the world as chaos. The work of the social scientist was to create order out of this 'chaos' by remaining outside the system and taking an observer stance. His work was to analyse the behaviour of man and understand the system in a 'scientific' way.

Looking at the world as chaos led further to the model of man where subsistence and survival were hypothesised as

[1]This paper has borrowed extensively from two other papers of the same author, the first presented at the Adult Education Research Seminar held at Kungalv, Sweden, June 25-27, 1979 and the second presented at the Participatory Research Meeting held in New Delhi, India, February 7-9, 1979.

> the prime driving forces. In order further to gain some control over the chaos it was necessary to generate a construct of social order demanding compliance.[2]

The classical research approach in social settings has, therefore, implicitly borrowed the method of inquiry used in the natural sciences. This has led to a distorted emphasis on 'objectivity' and researcher-object differentiation. This approach in social settings has placed primacy on developing research designs (both in the laboratory and in the field) that attempt to maintain the separation between the researcher and individuals in the social system under study. Such an emphasis will seem misdirected if we examine the three distinctive characteristics of inquiry in social settings:

(i) Social research means a study of individuals, groups and organisations in a social setting;

(ii) The researcher shares his essential humanity with the individuals in the social setting under study;

(iii) The very act of inquiry tends to have some impact on the social system under study.

One can clearly notice the differences that emanate from these distinctive characteristics of social research and inquiry in the natural sciences. To that extent, it is doubtful if social research can utilise a methodology that is implicitly based on the assumptions of natural science inquiry.

Another major influence of natural sciences on social inquiry is in terms of the acceptable purpose of research. In the natural sciences it is solely aimed at increased understanding of, and knowledge about, natural phenomena. The utilisation of this new knowledge has been the task of the technologist. Social science researchers have assigned similar roles to themselves. Social change based on the enhanced understanding of the social system and phenomena is not seen as an integral part of their role. In the absence of social technologists, the utilisation of new knowledge has been neglected.

The Historical Context

One may ask why social technologists have not 'arrived' in spite

[2]Sushanta Banerjee, 'Participatory Research: Ethic or Logic,' in Rajesh Tandon (ed.), *Participatory Research in Asia* (Canberra, Centre for Continuing Education—Australian National University, 1980), p. 26.

of this effort at 'objectivity'. The reasons should probably be found in the historical context in which the social sciences grew. The search for objectivity that finds its best example in Durkheim is the result of the interaction of the early twentieth century social thinkers with the natural scientists. Their pre-occupation was to show that sociology and anthropology were sciences i.e., objective like the natural sciences.[3] They had thus to be shown as studying an object that was outside man. Durkheim declared that the object of study was a social fact which is external to man 'every way of acting which is general through a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.'[4]

If Durkheim's pre-occupation was to show that sociology was different from psychology and philosophy, Weber had to show its psychological linkages which were essentially individualistic.

> The main intellectual influences in which Weber's work is steeped are as predominantly German as those which shaped Durkheim's writings are French. Moreover, Durkheim's early studies are rather abstract and philosophical in character...Weber's first works on the other hand, are detailed historical studies, and it was from within the context of specific problems brought to light primarily by the German historical school that Weber went on to expand the range of his writings to embrace questions of a general theoretical nature.[5]

Moreover, in all the classics including Marx, an evolutionistic trend is clear. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this was also a colonial context since it made a distinction between 'primitive' and 'advanced' societies—the former belonging to the colonies and the latter to the colonising countries. Though Indian sociologists gave it a 'national' interpretation by making the anthropologists study the 'primitive' tribes of India

[3] David Walsh, 'Sociology and the Social World,' in Paul Filmer, *New Directions in Sociological Theory* (London: Collier-Macmillan Publishers, 1972), pp. 16-18.

[4] Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 13.

[5] Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory—An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber* (London: Cambridge University Press, Reprint 1974), pp. 119-120.

and the sociologists studying India's 'advanced' societies,[6] the original intention of the colonialist trying to understand his own society by going back to the origin of 'primitive civilisations', or trying to know more about the colonies in order to better control them, has to be borne in mind.

It is in this context of evolutionism and its colonial past that the present should be examined. This is especially important if one bears in mind that in spite of thirty years of independence, our intellectuals are, by and large, dependent for their status and acceptance on their links with the West.

> From among the members of the second generation and of the third generation (of sociologists) some went to the United States and some to Britain after independence...All these persons formed a category and did influence sociological tradition in India, by introducing the new trends. For academic position a foreign degree, or even a stay abroad without any degree, was considered more acceptable by the universities and they filled up many positions in the university departments. This new trend was reinforced by the visit of the foreigners to India, again a very large number from the United States and a smaller number from Britain.[7]

Classical Methodology

This methodology was more and more quantitative in character and assumed the universality of social principles. In other words, methodologies developed in the West under a totally different social, cultural, economic and political situation were absolutised and transferred to India and other Third World countries. These methodologies that took the principles of natural sciences for granted, did not make allowance for the distinctive nature of social science inquiry. If we assume that it is impossible to control all the spurious interferences in social research (and this is an increasingly doubtful assumption), then it might be difficult to talk about 'reproducibility' and consequent generalisation. We only develop a partial understanding of a social phenomenon and this seriously limits our ability to generalise. Therefore, a major argument against the utilisation of

[6] I.P. Desai, 'Craft of Sociology in India—An Autobiographical Perspective,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 (n. 8 February 14, 1981), pp. 247-248,

[7] *Ibid.* p. 246.

knowledge generated by social research is its lack of applicability in particular settings. As the director of the Amul cooperative said recently,

> Technocratic approaches to improve productivity in our villages cannot put the tools of improved productivity into the hands of our poor, rural majority. Thus, increasingly, in our search for a key to rural development, we leave aside the conventional economists and technocrats and we turn to the sociologists. Then we encounter a paradox: the professional sociologist is very good at describing a social structure, at measuring attitudes to change, at diagnosing male/female roles and so on...But all these sociological exercises do not seem to be of much help, when it comes to putting some equality into the power structure, or modernising attitudes to change, or freeing women from the bondage of traditional ideas about men's and women's roles.[8]

To that extent, those interested in social change in a particular setting need to move away from this type of professionalism and initiate their own research process in that setting. It is because classical social research has neglected the issue of change of social systems except as one more subject of study. It has not only been indifferent to this issue but also actively punished those who attempted to combine the two purposes of understanding and change by labelling their efforts 'unscientific'.

Another argument against researchers' involvement in social change is premised on the misconception that research is value-free. Since all change, especially social change, is based on a normative vision of the 'desired' and since the researcher's task is to be objective and value-free in pursuit of his inquiry, how can one expect him to combine the process of inquiry with the process of change?

The underlying fallacy in this argument is the naive assumption that inquiry is value-free. Neither social research, nor even inquiry in the natural sciences is value-free. The researcher not only believes that the natural phenomena are orderly and therefore can be researched, but he also adopts a framework in order

[8]V. Kurien, *Productivity and Rural Development—Some Economic, Technical and Social Considerations* (New Delhi: National Productivity Council, 22nd Foundation Day Lecture, February 1980.)

to collect observations. These frameworks are as much normative as those held by social researchers.

Moreover, the myths of value-free inquiry and the non-normative role of the researcher have led to the dehumanising and catastrophic utilisation of knowledge. The overwhelming obsession of researchers with 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' has resulted in the development of nuclear missiles, biological poisons and psychological brainwashing. Other studies have shown how the standards of professionalism in the social sciences set by foreigners, have in fact led to a colonial control of institutions and knowledge.[9]

Finally, there is an ethical issue that has been largely neglected in classical social research. The practice of classical social research resulted in complete and exclusive control of the process and outcome of research by professional researchers. The researcher develops knowledge based on data collected from individuals, groups and organisations in a social setting. Those individuals, groups and organisations do not have any control over the knowledge generated from the data obtained from them. They are only the 'objects' of research.

And the researcher is neither accountable to them nor responsible for the use of knowledge thus generated. A researcher can do that in the natural sciences without any ethical considerations because the subject-matter is natural phenomena. Can we follow the same argument for inquiry in social phenomena?

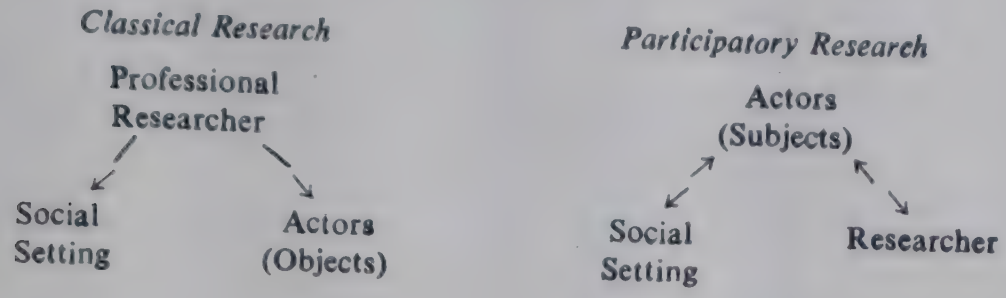
Participatory Research

In the light of the above frustrations with classical research, it may be valuable to analyse the issue of control a little more in depth. In various types of research approaches, what is chosen and who chooses? Figure I can give us some idea. (see next page)

As Figure I shows, classical research emphasises professional control over the generation, utilisation and elaboration of knowledge—hence the need for new approaches. Participatory research and evaluation maintain that the actors in the situation are not merely objects of someone else's study but are actively

[9]Zafarullah Chowdhury, 'Research—A Method of Colonisation,' in Rajesh Tandon, *op cit.*, pp. 16-25.

Figure 1: *Control over Knowledge-Generation and Elaboration Process*



influencing the process of knowledge-generation and elaboration. To that extent, the participatory approach is an effort to check the present trends of (a) professionalisation and centralisation of knowledge in its generation and utilisation since it can be used to manipulate the actors of a social setting without their having any control over it; (b) the neglect of the actors in the situation not only as sources of knowledge but also as its legitimate owners.

Is this an ethical issue or ideological confusion? Probably it is a combination of both. Whatever be the case, it is obvious that if the actors in the social setting become the owners of knowledge they generate, the process of this elaboration can itself become an important step in awareness-building and social change among the oppressed.

If we broadly classify research types into the three categories shown in figure II (see next page), then it is easy to understand how participatory research approach differs in some very fundamental ways. Academic research is what most professional researchers are engaged in and what most research institutes reward and encourage. Policy/evaluation research has become increasingly popular over the last two decades. An administrator, policy-maker or government agency commissions a research study in order to satisfy some of the administrative needs. This client is, by and large, outside the problem or area he wants researched by a professional researcher.

Participatory research has been set against these two types on the three key steps in a research act: choice of the problem, choice of the methodology and choice of the outcome. Figure II highlights, somewhat dramatically, this issue of control in research. Academic research has emphasised unilateral control by the professional researcher on all steps of a research act.

Figure II: *Distinctions between three types of Research Process*

Steps in Research	*Academic Research*	*Policy/Evaluation Research (Commissioned)*	*Participatory Research*
1. CHOICE OF PROBLEM			
What?	Choice based on the interest and discipline of the professional researcher	Choice based on client's administrative needs	Choice based on immediate problem situation
Who?	Professional researcher	Client (who is outside the problem area)	Jointly by the actors in the problem situation and professional researcher
2. CHOICE OF METHDOLOGY			
What?	Experimental research designs, use of reliable instruments, statistical analysis	Quasi-experimental field research designs, use of reliable instruments, statistical analysis	Consensual-validity-based research designs, use of empathic instruments, multiple analysis methods
Who?	Professional researcher	Professional researcher	Jointly by the actors and the professional researcher
3. CHOICE OF OUTCOME			
What?	Publications (Presentations in 'learned' seminars)	—Report (to the Client) —Publication (if the researcher negotiates)	—Changes in the situation —Increased knowledge base —Increased capacity among actors to inquire into and change their situations
Who?	Professional researcher	Client (primarily)	Jointly by the actors and the professional researcher

Participatory research and evaluation is an approach where this control is jointly shared by the researcher and the actors in the problem situation. While the former gives an absolute value to the minority of theorizers in a society, the latter begins with trust in the knowledge which the common man possesses. What has been said by some authors about the sociology of knowledge can equally well be applied to participatory research:

> Theoretical thought, 'ideas' *Weltanschauungen* are not *that* important in society. Although every society contains these phenomena, they are only part of the sum of what passes for 'knowledge'. Only a very limited group of people in any society engages in theorizing, in the business of 'ideas' and the construction of *Weltanschauugen*. But everyone in society participates in its 'knowledge' in one way or another. Put differently, only a few are concerned with the theoretical interpretation of the world, but everybody lives in a world of some sort...To exaggerate the importance of theoretical thought in society and history is a natural failing of theorizers. It is then all the more necessary to correct this intellectualistic misapprehension. The theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is 'real' for the members of a society. In other words, commonsense 'knowledge' rather than 'ideas' must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this 'knowledge' that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist.[10]

The Main Issues

Before going into the details of some of the implications of this fundamental emphasis in participatory research and evaluation, it might be worthwhile to enumerate what a participatory approach might entail concretely. First of all, in its broad and loose meaning, it has been an ongoing process in India. As mentioned in the above quotation, the label may be given by theoreticians, but its practice is quite common in groups engaged in the process of re-awakening the weakest sections of our society. As examples of such efforts one may mention the organisation of landless labourers in Dhulia district of Maharashtra that has used a similar

[10]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality—A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, Reprint 1973), pp. 26-27.

methodology in identifying the records of people whose land was illegally alientated from them.[11] Another well-known case is the Chipko movement in Uttar Pradesh where, as a result of the people's reflection on the causes of the 1970 floods, deforestation caused by some industrialists, the forest department's refusal to let the local poor use the Ash trees for their needs and the permission they granted to commercial contractors and industralists, the people organised themselves into a resistance group. A community forestry scheme based on the right of the local people to the forest produce and the maintenance of its environment was born out of it.[12]

The relevance of this chararteristic of a participatory approach is not merely to recognise that, while the label is new, the approach has existed over the years, but also to accept the fact that while labelling of concepts is an activity of professional researchers, ordinary people somehow do not see their approaches in similar conceptual frameworks. Participatory research is, therefore, a new approach for professionals and a pragmatic one for those in the field.

This poses significant questions for the development of a participatory method. For example, do we have a single, well-defined and well-articulated approach? Are we clear that the range represented by those engaged in participatory research and evaluation (from professional researchers located in universities to semi-literate field workers in the village) necessarily implies tensions which need to be addressed in an inclusive manner?

We do not as yet have clear-cut answers to all these questions but can only think of tentative steps. Figure III is an attempt to chart the steps of an 'ideal' participatory approach.

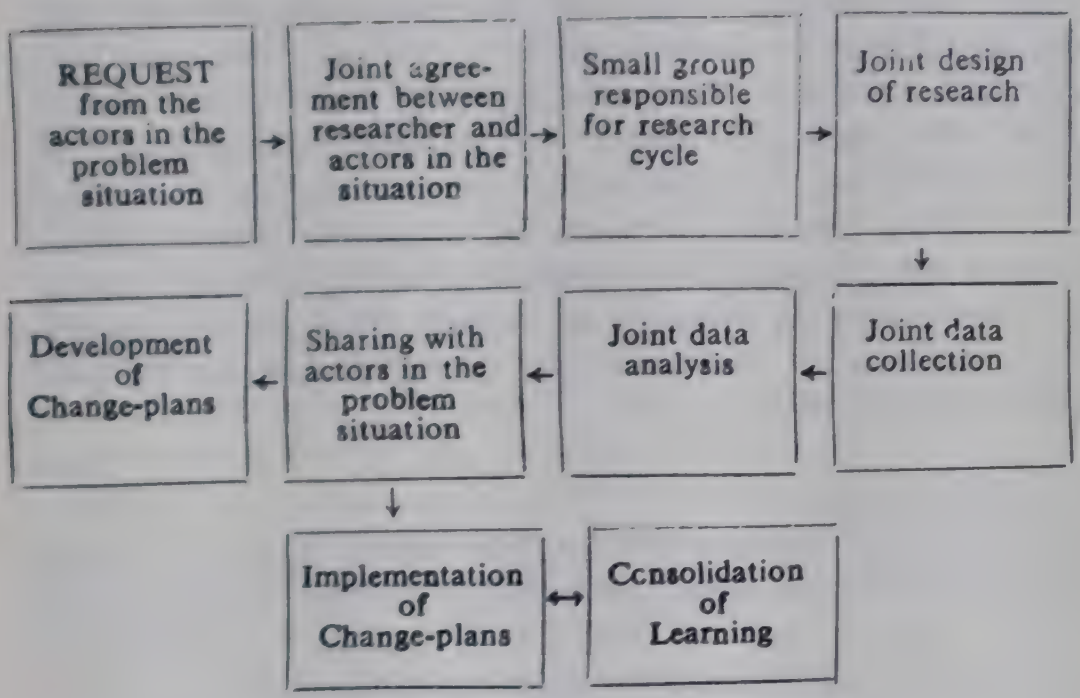
One major element missing in this 'ideal' model is the ideological/normative stance. To the extent that participatory approach is an attempt to break away from unidirectional control of the professional researcher, it has to be consistent in its definition of 'actors in the problem situation'. Therefore, participatory approach is solely in response to and for the fulfilment of the needs of the less powerful, weaker segments of a social setting and is part of a process of their growth into consciousness.

[11]'The Story of *Shramik Sangathan*' *How*/(n. 1 June, 1978), pp. 24-28.

[12]Gopa Joshi, 'Afforestation of Deforested Himalayas,' *How*, 4 (n. 4, , 1981) pp. 11-14.

> At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to create a dichotomy between the content of humanity and its historical forms. The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will canstitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection.[13]

Figure III: *Steps in an 'Ideal' Participatory Research Approach*



Some comments related to Figure III are needed here:

(i) The initial request in an ideal participatory process may come from the powerful actors in the situation. But in reality, this may not be so. The request may come from someone powerful within the situation, or outside it. Yet, the researcher can transform it into a participatory process by following some later steps, provided his ideological stance is explicit.

[13]Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books, Reprint 1980), p. 41.

(ii) Various steps outlined in Figure III appear to be one-shot, fixed ones. In reality, a participatory process has to be cyclical and iterative. For example, joint agreement may need to be worked and re-worked many times, over the entire cycle.

(iii) As presented here, various steps in the participatory process assume the involvement of an outside researcher. In reality, groups of actors in a particular setting may go through the entire process without any assistance from the outsider. In fact, effective participatory process must have the increased capacity of the actors in the situation to inquire into and change their situation as a valued outcome. To that extent, an outside researcher will become redundant soon.[14]

(iv) As presented in figure III, the participatory process may appear identical to Action Research. However, there are two significant ways in which participatory research is different. First, the ideological stance and emphasis on making the researcher's value-premises explicit are generally not mentioned in the action research approach. Second, action research can be, and is being, undertaken without the participation and control of the actors in the situation. In essence, then, action research becomes another method in the exclusive control of the professional researcher.

The Participants

A related characteristic that deserves mention here is the range of people and their diverse motivations to enter into the participatory process. We can see the participants at two levels i.e, professionals and the common man, especially the oppressed.

At the professional level, in the Indian context, there are at least three sets of people and motivations. One set comprises those who have been trained professionally in the empiricist paradigm of traditional social science research. They have moved into participatory research due to frustration with the existing forms of research. For this set, the reality has remained untouched and unchanged despite tremendous development in research technology. They notice that despite the increased volume

[14]For more on it see, 'The Activist's Credo' (Excerpts from the Report of the Workshop on 'The Training and Methodology of Training for Activists' prepared by Kamla Bhasin and Vasant Palshikar Lakshmi Rao), *Voluntary Action*, 23 (n. 5, December 1980), pp. 249-251.

of printed material, the life of ordinary people has remained unchanged. Moreover, the institutionalisation of research in the universities and other such institutes has led to a monopolistic control over research, on the one hand, and a distance of research from ordinary people on the other. For this set of researchers, such irrelevance of social science research is intolerable in the context of a poor society like ours.

For the second set, motivation is related to the need to redirect the processes of development in the country. The failure of existing programmes and models of development is being well established. These are the activists and field workers who have experienced frustration and anger over the misdirection of our developmental strategies. For them, participatory research is a possible alternative to provide momentum to decentralised alternative models of development— development of the people with their active participation. They are engaged in localised experiments in a participatory process to try out these alternative models of development.

Education as a means of social transformation is the underlying motivation of the third set. For this set of people, research is a learning and educational experience and therefore, should be attempted in a manner that facilitates societal level change. Unless research contributes to learning and unless that learning is widespread enough to include those who are part of that setting, it is a meaningless activity. To that extent, participatory research has been found to be a relevant approach to education and learning.

At the level of the oppressed sections, the participants are predominantly rural. The size of the rural population in India and in other Asian countries, as well as the complexities of developmental dynamics, have contributed to the overwhelming rural context of participatory research in this country, or for that matter, in the Third World as a whole. The best examples of this process are, in fact, from rural areas. As examples we may mention the Joint Irrigation System among tribals in Southern Rajasthan, *Gram Vikas* in the Ganjam district of Orissa or ***Bhumi Sena*** in the Thane district of Maharashtra.

This rural context has contributed to a much better understanding of the processes involved than would have been possible in an urban professional atmosphere. Moreover, Indian activists

and researchers have been able to learn from similar experiments in other countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and have been able to contribute to learning in these continents. In that sense, it is considerably different from similar experiments in Europe and North America and can at best compliment them since they are, by and large, urban in character.

SOME IMPLICATIONS

It should be clear from what has been said above that the participatory approach is not value-neutral but is ideologically committed to the weakest sections. It has a necessary relationship with social transformation and action while classical social science research has conspicuously avoided any active involvement. It is this close linkage between social action and its political implications that has scared many professional researchers from adopting a participatory approach. These professionals work on the assumption that research should be value-neutral.

However, one can question the validity of such an assumption. Though scholars may consider themselves objective, the system within which they work cannot be politically neutral. Research in social settings has always been political and either maintains, explains or justifies the *status quo* or provides data to those who want to question, examine or transform it. Moreover, studies have shown that many apparently Charitable Foundations such as Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller have in fact been used as tools of American foreign policy though the scholars concerned may not have been aware of it. The decision-making process, the nature of funding and the type of institutions they helped to build up all indicate a definite policy.[15] What has been said about the above foundations can be said also about many national institutions and the funding policies of many other countries.

On the other hand, participatory research and evaluation cannot be considered merely one more mode of community development. In the Indian context and in the Third World as

[15]Robert F. Arnove, 'Foundations and the Transfer of Knowledge – Implications for India,' *Social Action*, 31 (n. 2 April-June, 1981), pp. 144-173.

a whole, the participatory approach is increasingly becoming synonymous with the processes of liberation of people. The involvement of poor, marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers in the twin processes of participatory evaluation and social action have resulted in enhancing their self-confidence and ability to take collective initiatives in their common interest.

While it is different from the classical community development approach, participatory evaluation can contribute towards the liberation of people only if it is associated with some form of participatory social action. The challenge to researchers as well as activists is 'are we prepared to accept this as an operational definition of the participatory approach?' The researcher who accepts this definition has to commit himself to an approach that is closely linked with action. One cannot demarcate separate identities of participatory research and community development without asserting the elements of participatory social action.

To the extent that participatory research is invariably associated with some form of social action, it has very clear political implications. To use the participatory approach in identifying land alienation with the organisation of landless tribal labourers is to link inquiry with the political dynamics of the setting. To join with the farmers to engage in the social analysis of their existing situation is to raise political pressures about the existing structure. To develop an alternative health care system which favours the rural poor is to enter into direct conflict with those whose interests are challenged. It is so because the process of social control is a political process.

> Differences in the ability to make rules and apply them to other people are essentially power differentials (either legal or extra-legal). Those groups whose social position gives them weapons and power are best able to enforce their rules. Distinctions of age, sex, ethnicity and class are all related to differences in power, which accounts for differences in the degree to which groups so distinguished can make rules for others.[16]

The participatory approach, therefore, by its commitment to the underprivileged as well as to social action, enters into a

[16]Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders—Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), pp. 17-18.

political arena where questions of method and validity become nplistic. It is because the rural Indian, for that matter the in and Third World context, is primarily unorganised. The underprivileged, whether landless labourers or urban slum-dwellers or women, are primarily unorganised. In a large measure, their state of poverty, exploitation and helplessness are related to this non-organisation.

To initiate a participatory process with such underprivileged groups means to initiate the process of organisation-building. Unless this process leads to genuine organisation, one cannot think of a genuine participatory approach. In fact, in the absence of an organisation, the participatory research efforts can become tools of unilateral manipulation by an outsider. To that extent, initiating participatory research efforts with unorganised groups requires an initial effort in developing a rudimentary form of their organisation.

If there is this initial effort, many instances have shown that the participatory research effort itself contributes to the building of an organisation of the people with whom this process is started. By the sheer process of attempting to bring a group of small marginal farmers to analyse their own situation, temporary organisations of farmers developed in the tribal areas of Southern Rajasthan. In other words, this poses some questions about the methodology of the participatory approach. To the extent that Indian and Third World societies are unorganised in comparison with more developed countries of the West, any participatory research effort in the poor nations has to be simultaneously an effort at building organisations. This is not necessarily the situation in the rich countries.

Development of Knowledge

Another question that arises from the above discussion is: how to develop authentic, valid knowledge? The participatory process tends to lay emphasis on authenticity as opposed to validity. The concept of validity as defined by the classical research paradigm is inappropriate for several reasons. First of all, knowledge about a social setting is not equivalent to information obtained from it. The meaning attached to that information is more important. Any representation of social reality is contingent upon such meanings that actors attach to their reality.

Secondly, the impact of historical contingency on knowledge derived from social settings is too critical to apply to universal constructs of validity. Existing criteria of validity are concerned with the generalisability of the outcome of research.

Participatory research, on the contrary, is potentially an attempt to generalise a *process* of research, instead of its outcome. To that extent, the criteria of validity need to focus on the external generalisability and internal consistency of the research process itself. What can be some initial elements of such a concept of validity? One can enumerate the following among many other possibilities:

(i) *Relevance*: Historical, temporal and spatial.

(ii) *Researcher calibration*: Sensitivity of the researcher; emphasis on the calibration and reliability of the researcher as opposed to an instrument or a method.

(iii) *Convergence*: Emphasis on consensus of issues, multiplicity of methods and congruence between processes and outcome.

(iv) *Inclusion*: Context, actors and researcher. Emphasis on looking at the research approach as a social process and managing the confluence between the aspects of the setting, actors in the setting and the researcher.

How can we build an alternative concept of validity based on the stance that participatory research and evaluation emphasise generalisability of the research process itself? This is one question that still needs to be studied, because though many groups in the field are involved in the participatory process, not sufficient work has been done at the macro-level.

Moreover, if the generalisability of the research process is emphasised in the participatory approach, what is the outcome of research itself? It can be at different levels:

(i) Immediate social action and change is one such outcome. The actors in the research process engage in a common effort to transform their situation since they become aware of the causes of the present state and their own potential to be agents of change.

(ii) Increased knowledge about the particular social setting is another outcome. Unlike in the classical system where the outside researcher has the monopoly of knowledge, in the partcipatory approach it is available both with the researcher and the

actors of the social setting. This enables the actors to begin a new decision-making process based on this knowledge.

(iii) Increased capacity among the actors in the situation to inquire into and change their situation is another important outcome. This is the result of the new self-confidence they gain as a result of the initial common search for knowledge and combined effort at action. Persons who were till then considered incapable of being anything more than servants and implementers of the orders of the powerful (and at the research level, objects of an outsider's study), are now considered capable of analysing and understanding their own reality. This leads to a new self-image and increased potential to learn and act.[17] This is the educational aspect of the participatory approach where the actors in the situation learn how to learn; deutero-learning occurs in the process.

If these are the potential outcomes of a participatory approach, what happens to enhancement of knowledge? Viewed from a classical researcher's point of view, there may not be increased knowledge since in this system the end-product is a professional report. But the participatory approach leads to a different kind of end-product, though a macro-research type of report need not be excluded. The main outcome of the participatory approach is increased knowledge about the social setting that is available both with the researcher and actors in the situation. Is this not enhancement of knowledge, or, is such enhancement exclusively the task of the professional researcher?

CONCLUSION

This paper has tried to study the frustrations experienced by professional researchers from various points of view. There are the ideological issues of the use made of the knowledge generated, the ethical issues of using the actors as objects of study and leaving the control of knowledge in the hands of the professionals, and the political issues of the use that is made of this knowledge by those who fund the research programme. It

[17] J.M. Heredero, *Rural Development and Social Change: An Experiment in Non-Formal Education* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1977), pp. 32-35.

is the realisation that the present professional approach to research is in fact a reproduction of our unjust society in which a few decision-makers control the rest of the population that has led many to move away from the classical methods and experiment with alternative approaches.

Many others have shied away from participatory research since they consider it a political process. If the researcher really wants to find an alternative to the present system which has not led to any social change in spite of increase in printed material, he makes his ideological stand explicit. If we get involved in research efforts that assist the less powerful and the weak, the so-called research process becomes a political one.

However, those who shy away from the participatory approach because of its political implications do not seem to realise that research in social settings has always been political. It either maintains, explains or justifies the *status quo* or questions it, though the researcher may not take an active part in changing it. We may not be aware of the political aspects of our research efforts because we never believed that our inquiry was normative or we never made our ideological stance explicit.

A transition to the participatory approach requires some basic attitudes on the part of the researcher. If the researcher or the activist, as the case may be, practises participation in his own work, it is much more likely that he will be able to facilitate participation of the people in various research efforts. On the other hand, it is doubtful how an authoritarian personality of the researcher can encourage a participatory approach with the underprivileged.

In other words, the values of the researchers have to be in congruence with the values of the participatory approach. He has to believe in the basic strengths of the people and has to cherish democratic values in the proper sense of the term. The behavioural skills required to encourage and sustain participation of people must be possessed by the researchers. These behavioural skills become critical in the context of the focus on the underprivileged sections of our population. Since a dominant characteristic of the underprivileged is their inability to and fear of participation, greater effort is required to facilitate the participation of such sections.

These are some of the challenges of participatory research and evaluation in our country. By their very nature they are macro-challenges. But we need to deal with them both at the macro and micro-level through a combination of research and action aimed at empowering the marginalised sections of our society.

2

Nature of People's Participation in Development: Role of Voluntary Organisations

Walter Fernandes[1]

Though the Government of India has taken upon itself the task of building the infrastructure for the country's development, many voluntary organisations have felt that this work cannot be left only to the state. While some of them work in competition with the planned development programmes and duplicate the infrastructure, thus leading to wastage of resources in a poor country, many others enter the field because they realise that most technical, organisational and educational inputs tend to reach only those who already have something, that the distance between the dominant sections of society and the dependent groups has increased, and that the situation of the latter has deteriorated.[2]

[1] In carrying out this study I was assisted by Ms Kusum Gupta, Research Fellow at the Indian Social Institute. The investigators were T. Francis, K.J. John, B. Minz, M.D. Thomas and Edith Vithayathil Project Officers of the ISI-Extension Service. I thank them for their help and am also grateful to Ms Sushma Chawla and Ms Sheryl Cross for secretarial assistance.

[2] A. Vaidyanathan, 'Some Aspects of Inequalities in Living Standards in Rural India', in T.N. Srinivasan and P.K. Bardhan (eds.), *Poverty and Income Distribution in India* (Calcutta: Statistical Publishing Society, 1974), pp. 215-241; V.M. Dandekar and N. Rath, *Poverty in India: Dimensions and Trends* (Bombay: Sameeksha Publications, 1971), Ch. I.

Many voluntary groups feel that the main cause of this imbalance is the choice of the economic growth model of development which may be efficient but not always effective. Despite this consolidation of inequalities and injustice, the Government that has to take political decisions often under pressure from the dominant sections, cannot afford to alienate them by changing the system to suit the needs of the underprivileged classes. Voluntary action, on the contrary, can create conditions that may enable the marginalised groups to acquire the rights they have been denied by the present lopsided planning. Hence many voluntary agencies have taken new initiatives.

It may be noted that though many voluntary organisations are today in the forefront of innovative action, they still remain a minority in the voluntary sector. Moreover, the voluntary agencies have passed through a historical process that has brought them to the present understanding of development. In the 1950s, most of them were either in relief (satisfying the immediate needs of the people) or in institutionalised programmes such as schools and hospitals. In the 1960s, many of them realised that families with a weak economic base were unable to get the benefits of the institutions and that relief could not solve the problems. 'If you give a man a fish, you feed him once. If you teach him to fish, you help him to feed himself' became the slogan. Efforts were, therefore, focused on productivity-oriented technology and on functional literacy-oriented extension work.

However, by the 1970s, many voluntary organisations began to feel that economic inputs alone could not overcome poverty which, they felt, was the result of the oppressive social structures. Their experiences as well as other developments in the country convinced them that the dominant sections tended to get most of the benefits of the economic growth-oriented technical and other organisational inputs.[3] A new type of education, geared to making the weakest sections aware of their situation in order to help them become active agents of their own development and change in their society, was thus considered essential.

These organisations work on the assumption that education of the poor is an essential element in the process of enabling

[3]L.S. Arora, *Rural Development in India* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1979), pp. 27-35.

them to acquire their rights. Though the physical achievement of targets is important, their benefits can reach the most underprivileged sections only if the 'target-group' is properly identified from the very beginning, the impact of the inputs on these groups analysed, a process of education initiated to assist them in their growth towards awareness of their situation and their capabilities and the economic and other inputs adapted to their needs.[4]

However, there is a difference of opinion among them on the strategy to be adopted. Some of them tend to concentrate only on political education to the exclusion of economic inputs, for fear that they may obstruct a genuine educational process. Some others feel that an economic or technical component should be used as a tool for education and that the weakest sections are often unable to become active without some economic support.

In order to study the interaction between these two components and their implications for people's involvement, the Indian Social Institute recently evaluated some programmes of voluntary agencies and analysed their impact on the weakest sections of society. This paper will present this evaluation which includes ten projects that have some common features. The main sponsors belonged to some religious or secular organisation, but very few of them were well qualified professionals. However, they give free services or take a very low salary and thus have great scope for experimentation. Moreover, all of them received part of their funds from the same funding organisation.

FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The present evaluation has been aimed at exploring, on a comparative basis, the developmental impact of the activities and approaches of ten projects. It tried to study the role of education and techno-economic inputs in each of these programmes with a view to understanding the nature of people's participation in development. The evaluation addressed the following questions within the overall perspective of people's participation:

[4]Carol H. Weiss, *Evaluation Research: Methods of Assessing Progress of Effectiveness* (Delhi: Prentice Hall, 1979); Gerald Hursch-Cesar and Prodipto Roy, *Third World Surveys: Research in Developing Nations* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1976).

TYPES OF PROJECTS

S. No.	Project Type	State	Activities	Total cost (Rs.) (% of foreign aid)	Beneficiaries Type	Beneficiaries Nos.
A.	Community Water Supply	Andhra Pradesh	Organise people to help themselves using the drinking water scheme as an entry point	15,25,000 (38)	Socio-economically weaker sections	15,000
B.	Public Health outreach Programme	Andhra	On paper outreach but in practice health centre with focus on curative care.	4,94,600 (75)	Coolies and small farmers	10,000
C.	Resettlement and Community Dev. Prog.	Karnataka	Construction of 2 salt water exclusion dams, agro-extension and provision of agricultural services	14,97,440 (50)	Flood-affected families; persons evacuated during construction of port; neighbouring villages	5,000
D.	Non-Formal Education	Tamilnadu	(i) Non-formal education (NFE) (ii) Construction of resource centre for NFE	5,00,000 (50)	Fishermen, palmyrah climbers, cashewnut factory workers, coolies	One taluka
E.	Slum Organisation Pilot Project	Maharashtra	(i) Housing; (ii) Community centre; (iii) Balwadi, milk distribution, recreational	29,49,500 (22.46)	Harijans, Slum-dwellers	265 families

			activities, library, adult literacy, self-employment scheme, technical training etc.			
F.	Slum Rebuilding	Maharashtra	(i) 3 buildings with 140 flats (ii) Balwadi, dispensary, tailoring school, creche	26,75,425 (74.27)	Slum dwellers	140 families
G.	Agricultural Development	Maharashtra	Agricultural programme	3,40,357 (73.46)	Big, small and marginal farmers	One village
H.	Rural Development	Karnataka	(i) Various economic activities with high level technology (tailoring, poultry units, mechanised fishing, agricultural and dairy cooperative, fertilisers, calf rearing etc). (ii) Only recently started extension service	Total 1.42 crores since 1968 (25.88)	Small, medium and big farmers and fishermen	20 villages (pop. 20,000)
I.	Fishermen's Education	Kerala	(i) Non-formal education (ii) Credit units for men (iii) Nylon net making by young girls	2,57,580 (50)	Fishermen	One village
J.	Fishing Cooperative	Kerala	Purchase of mechanised boats and fishing accessories	3,47,000 (72.76)	Fishermen	70 families

—Are their activities primarily to meet the felt needs of the weakest sections of society?
—Are their activities resulting in developmental impact?
—Will the project benefits be sustained?
—Do their activities have potential for spread effects and replicability?
—Is concentration primarily on the education of the weakest sections of society or on technical inputs?
—How have the educational and economic inputs interacted?

SAMPLE OF PROJECTS

The projects were chosen from the four southern states and the neighbouring Maharashtra. The reason for this choice is that the biggest number of groups doing pioneering work are found in these states. Moreover, from the beginning we had decided that ours should not be a purely academic study but that we should bring these groups together to share their experiences in the light of this study. Hence, choice of a relatively small region was essential.

Another criterion was the time element. We chose only those projects that were funded by this agency in 1976 and 1977, thus limiting the study to projects that had a minimum of two and a maximum of four years of implementation. However, two of these programmes had originated already in the late 1960s but received funds from this particular agency in the mid-1970s. This longer duration helped us to compare their experiences with those of more recent programmes.

The range of projects in terms of some key factors, was rather wide as can be seen from the chart on the adjacent page. One can see from the chart that the sample contains projects of various types of inputs. In one project (A) a drinking water scheme has been used as a tool to organise people; In one institutional health project (B) focus is on curative approach; one (C) is a community development project; two projects (D and I) have non-formal education as the main thrust; two (E and F) are slum reconstruction programmes; There was one (G) agricultural programme and two (H and J) projects with somewhat sophisticated technical inputs.

PROCESS OF EVALUATION

This evaluation was exploratory in nature, meant to develop a methodology for participatory evaluation and was not itself fully participatory. Before the evaluation, the evaluators had spent some time with four of the ten programmes, two of whose sponsors expressed the need of an external evaluation and the other two readily agreed when we suggested the possibility. Two more projects were known to our investigators and we chose the remaining four purposively and got their sponsors' written permission. Only after the evaluation we realised that two out of them had, under pressure, given us permission reluctantly.

The questionnaire and the modalities were discussed with some of the sponsors but were formulated by the evaluators and completed in consultation with the investigators. The field investigators were asked to read and memorise the questionnaires thoroughly but not to have them in their hands while interviewing the persons. They were to turn the interview into an informal chat and were not to take down any notes during the discussion. They were asked to write down all their impressions at the end of the day in the privacy of their room. During the interview itself they were not to worry about the order of the questions but only about the main thrust of the project. They were to live in the project area and make an effort to go through the process which the people were passing through. All but two of the investigators followed these instructions.

The main sources of data collection included documents pertaining to the sample projects, interviews with the sponsor, staff, participants, government officers and on-the-spot observations of our staff. The evaluators spent some time with most projects either before or after the evaluation.

After the report was completed, it was sent to the sponsors and they were invited to Bangalore for a meeting during which they shared their experiences, learnt from one another and reacted to the report. At least six of them felt the need of an ongoing evaluative approach and invited the evaluators to help them with this process. However, it was also clear that most viewed the present study as an external evaluation and their reactions were in conformity with such an approach.

In spite of the inbuilt checks and thorough briefing given to the investigators, a subjective element remains since one's

perception of and judgement on various dimensions of a project's development impact, type of sponsor, administrative and technical efficiency etc. are relevant only in the context of the general situation in a country at a given moment of time. These perceptions and judgements tend to vary from place to place and from time to time. The evaluators have taken a look at one point of the programme and have not themselves experienced its various stages. In that sense, their experience is different from that of the project sponsors who have a reflective reaction to events. While missing this reaction, the investigators, it is hoped, have complemented it with their external reflection.

STARTING POINTS AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The projects had adopted different starting (or entry) points and each had an influence over the nature and extent of people's participation. These starting points can be broadly classified into three :

A. Disaster or Displacement

Three projects began as a result of disaster or displacement of persons. The community development programme (C) was an ongoing programme working for the economic upliftment of 36 families when 75 families were displaced from a neighbouring area as a result of the construction of a port. The displaced persons sought the intervention of the sponsor in their demands for higher compensation and rehabilitation. A small island, till then considered unfit for human habitation because of annual floods, was chosen for this purpose and a flood control bund was constructed. After discussion with the people and the funding agency, it was thought advisable to expand the programme into a comprehensive scheme for a group of villages and not limit it only to the displaced persons.

Thus the programme expanded to include bunds, desilting of a stream, formation of a cooperative, employment generation, agricultural extension and training, marketing and credit, nutrition etc. From the beginning the sponsor believed in de-centralisation of planning and implementation. But though the programme itself was planned in cooperation with the people and the government officials, its primary orientation was economic

improvement based on technological inputs. As a result, it has certain limitations regarding the involvement of the people in the process of its implementation.

The fishermen's cooperative began as a result of clashes between fishermen and the middlemen-cum-money lenders who were exploiting the former by restricting their marketing facilities, giving them low price and keeping them within their clutches. Since the fishermen and the middlemen belonged to different religious communities, it was viewed as a communal clash, though in reality the causes were purely economic. The aim of the project was 'to transform the illiterate backward village into a model place worthy of human beings.'

However, the primary orientation of the people and of the sponsor was on economic projects which required technology for which the local people were not trained. The banks whose cooperation was sought, insisted on working only through a registered body, which this cooperative was not. The people who were dependent on others till then thus became dependent on the sponsor. Consequently, despite the sponsor's good will, decentralisation and people's participation were not effective.

Similarly, the slum organisation project (E) began when the slums were flooded during the monsoons and the dwellers took shelter in a school building nearby. The sponsor who was on the staff of the school thus came in direct contact with the people for the first time. At that time he found in the slums an infrastructure which could be used in order to build up a community. There was a slum-dwellers' organisation which was inactive but could be reactivated. A youth club too existed though that too was inactive. With the sponsor and an active social worker as catalytic agents, the leadership potential of the youth would be activated and they would be able to take control of the slum-dwellers' association and reactivate it.

Briefly, the slum-dwellers felt the need of a more secure dwelling and only required outside help to supplement their efforts. These factors favoured the involvement of the people and their education. The programme grew into a people's project and provided organisational continuity through the involvement of the beneficiaries. Initially the sponsor took a purely charitable approach and both he and the people concentrated only on housing. Slowly, however, the people as well as the sponsor's

institution realised the need of an educative process and saw the possibility of using housing as a rallying point to organise the poor: another illustration of effective participation.

B. Discontent

Another starting point is discontent—among the poorest sections in some areas and among the sponsors in others. The drinking water project is a case of the weakest sections showing their discontent. The poorest who suffered the most from this lack, viewed it as a result of the power structures—the few who controlled both the *panchayat* and the religious institutions, ignored the poor. Neither the *panchayat* nor other government agencies whom they controlled implemented the scheme though it was promised before every election. This discontent was thus directed towards the upper castes in the village and towards the religious institution to which about 75% of the population belonged but was controlled by the same dominant minority. Some of the 'low caste' youth who were getting impatient were further awakened by a seminar conducted by a national Institute and took up the leadership of their group.

The leader of the religious institution had to resign as a result of this discontent. The new leader, though belonging to an upper caste but not the same as the dominant one, was able to understaud the situation and was able to mobilise the people to begin work on a drinking water scheme. In itself it is a highly technical scheme. But the weakest sections had a group of young persons who had gone through a process of education and were prepared to take up the leadership. As a result, a predominantly technical scheme functioned as a rallying point to unite the weakest sections of society and to change the power structure within the villages—an example of successful participation.

In the non-formal education programme (D), it was the discontent on the part of the sponsor with a purely economic approach to development in which he was already involved. He realised that the causes of poverty are much deeper and that an educative process—not merely economic projects—is required to solve these problems. Hence he gave up economic programmes in favour of NFE. In the case of the fishermen's educational project (I), college students who become aware of the unjust

social system, together with their leader, initiated a programme of education of the fishermen.

In both these cases, there is a constant tension between the economic and educational content. The sponsors themselves would like to concentrate principally on education and awareness-building process of the people. But the 'beneficiaries' are used to a more economic development-oriented approach and fail to respond to a purely educational process that does not begin with some sort of an economic content. As a result, the sponsor of the fishermen's educational programme is obliged to introduce a few economic programmes, but knows all along the line that the final purpose is the awareness-building process and that the economic content is to be used only as a tool. The participation of people becomes the guiding factor for choice of a tool.

C. Philanthrophy

Several projects had upper or middle class persons' humanitarian concern as starting points. The slum rebuilding Project (F) began as a result of a feeling among the middle classes (near whose houses the slums were located), that they had to initiate action. The houses were on the grounds of a school attended by middle class children. Some of the parents, under the guidance of the sponsor, decided to come together and find a solution since the school had to work in shifts because of insufficient accommodation.

The parents of the school children viewed slums only as a housing problem and did not take the marginalisation of the slum-dwellers, involvement of political parties, persons having a vested interest in the continuation of slums and other complex issues into consideration. It began as a housing project conceived by the committee of parents which tried to get the slum-dwellers involved by inducting three of them into the committee.

Some effort was made to bring the slum-dwellers together into an organisation. However, other elements such as the negotiations involved in the transfer to a new area about three kms from the slums and the multi-storeyed buildings, limited the people's participation to the minimum. But the very negotiations and the hope of a better house seem to have led to a limited educative process. Unlike in so many other slum rehabilitation projects,

the participants in this programme have genuinely made the new house their own. Not one has moved out of the new dwelling or sub-let it as it has happened in many other programmes. Many have made additions to their flats. Besides, there is a nascent organisation of the inhabitants which the sponsors encourage. Thus they try to remedy the situation concerning people's participation. Moreover, a community health programme has been initiated. If taken in the right direction it can be effective in organising the people.

The agricultural and rural development projects (G and H) began as a result of a few middle class individuals feeling uneasy about poverty around them. Both of them took an economic turn in the beginning, the former with agricultural inputs. The latter began with mechanised boats for otherwise neglected fishermen and slowly extended the programme to landless labourers and small farmers through dairy, poultry and agricultural programmes. With the expansion of the programme, need was felt, of opening new units. As the dairy and poultry units expanded, the organisation felt the need of a feed-making unit and a milk-chilling plant. Because of the uncertainty of electricity, a diesel generator had to be installed....

Gradually, the sponsor felt that the organisation was caught up in an ever-expanding system. The governing body is made up of local leaders, yet he felt that the technical content, instead of leading to greater involvement of the people, could easily reduce it since the technicians and the extension workers were becoming the key personnel. He tried to remedy this situation by organising a different type of extension programme that concentrates on the education of the landless and other weakest sections. But it is not certain that the governing body, now dominated by those who were once poor but have come up in life because of those economic inputs, will permit such an evolution, though a small beginning has been made in this direction by appointing a few educators.

The agricultural project concentrated on improving one village through agricultural inputs. Since the management of the project is in the hands of a committee of the sponsor and other experts, and the people are only beneficiaries, it has not been able to generate much participation.

The health project (B) was the result of an institution of

middle class people becoming aware of the poor health situation around it and desiring to solve this problem. Though the sponsor proposed a community health project with an outreach focus, it has evolved as a curative programme around a 10-bed hospital. The main reason for this change-over seems to be lack of proper perspective on the part of the sponsor who seems to have accepted the funding agency's proposal for a community health programme without understanding its meaning or implications. Their formation was curative and background institutional. Little participation was possible in such a situation.

As can be clearly seen from the above, a combination of factors seems to facilitate or hinder people's participation in developmental efforts. Some are related to starting points and others are influenced by the evolution of the programme which can limit the participation elements of the starting point or remove its constraints. Philanthropic motivation of middle/upper classes rarely catalyses effective participation of people. But awareness of the constraints can change the attitude of the sponsor and the evolution of the project. Similarly, a narrow economic and technical orientation without educational, awareness-building and training components does not facilitate real participation. These aspects need to be borne in mind as we move to the analysis of the programmes in terms of their impact.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Realising that the fruits of planned economic development in independent India have not reached the weakest sections of our society, persons involved in development recognise that they should be the 'traget-group' of the activities of the voluntary organisations and that the projects should meet the priority needs of these sections.[5]

The data gathered from this evaluation reveals that the projects rate from moderate to very high on account of the coverage of the weakest sections in the choice of their participants (who are sometimes known as the 'target-groups'). Though the coverage of the weakest sections and meeting their priority needs are

[5]H.S. Bhola, *Evaluation of Functional Literacy* (Amersham: Hulton Education Publications Ltd., 1979), pp. 80-85.

two essential components of development projects, they are passive variables. In other words, as will be evident in further analysis, the presence of these two variables in itself does not ensure people's participation which is fundamental for a real process of development. The health project, for example, is for the weakest sections. But it is difficult to say that it generated people's participation. Other variables need to be studied.

1. DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

In this study, the concept of development impact has been broken into three dimensions :

—*Direct benefits* or the physical implementation of the project;
—*Benefit Continuation* after the external resources are exhausted or withdrawn;
—*Benefit growth*—prospects for future development in the same or related activities by the same participant population or by others in the same or different area.

It is evident from the variables that emphasis is on the education and organisation of the weakest sections. Direct benefits i.e. physical achievement become meaningful only in the context of the educative value of these programmes. Several aspects of development impact became clear in this evaluation.

(i) Continuity of a project cannot be judged merely from the cost-benefit ratio but it has to be considered an important element. The techniques used, their feasibility and benefits have to be evaluated. Though this evaluation does not ignore the economic content, it gives much greater weightage to the educative process and people's organisation which are rarely given sufficient importance in evaluation studies.

Seen from the economic point of view, projects such as slum rebuilding would probably get a slightly higher score while others that may not be economically viable may be lower. Because of its technical feasibility, economic viability and educational-cum-organisational achievements, the drinking water scheme would still get the highest score. Similarly, because of lack of all these achievements, the health project would still remain the lowest. In other words, the judgements arrived at in estimating continuity are essentially predictive. The underlying

hypothesis is that the projects with strong praticipatory, educative and organisational content and with provision for maintenance cost, have a better chance of sustaining their impact after external support is withdrawn.

Seen from this point of view, the drinking water project stands the highest chance of continuity since it has been decided to hand its maintenance over to the local *panchayat*, while the youth and other leadership groups will supervise its functioning and will ensure its organisational continuity. Though highly technical, the local people, especially the young leaders of the poorest, have acquired the supervisory skills required to maintain it. They have used this programme as a rallying point to organise themselves and take control of the village as well as the political structures. Thus, continuity of the programme is in the people, not merely in the technical inputs.

Involvement of people in the actual running of the slum organisation project is very high. Decisions concerning the daily running of the programmes are taken by the people. However, the crucial decisions of the programme may not be taken on the spot but in negotiations with the government officials. Consequently, though the people may organise *morchas* and put pressure on the Government, both the drinking water as well as the slum organisation schemes seem to depend to a great extent on the contacts and influence of the sponsor. In the case of the latter, the sponsor has the additional advantage of being attached to an educational institution to which many influential persons may like to send their children. In that sense, there may be a certain amount of dependence of the people on the sponsor and participation limited to some extent.

(ii) The situation of the fishermen's cooperative, agricultural and rural development projects would indicate that the people's involvement is in inverse proportion to the sophistication of the technical inputs. However, the fact that though health is a felt need of the people and its techniques are not too sophisticated, the project has not generated any active participation, would show that technical inputs are not the only limiting factor in people's involvement. People's education is one of the decisive elements.

On the other hand, the success of the drinking water scheme would be an indication that even technical inputs can be mastered

with proper preparation of the people and that they can be used not merely as means of economic improvement but as a rallying point to bring the weakest sections together. Consequently, though technical inputs are a limiting factor in these projects, one can hypothesise that if the sponsors had taken a more educative process as their objective, they could have achieved the goal of empowering the poor to change their own society instead of depending on outsiders to do it for them.

This is probably one of the challenges the voluntary organisations have to face. Those viewing development from the perspective of growth in the GNP concentrate primarily, if not exclusively, on technical inputs, forgetting in the process that technological growth has a definite social, political, economic and colonial history.[6]

Others would think that the poor should be satisfied with low-level, traditional or intermediate technology. The type of technology to be used has to be decided according to the local needs and not by the desire of the rich who would like to deprive the poor of many technical inputs in the name of ecology and conservation of resources which they themselves waste on their luxuries. However, if the weakest sections have to acquire some strength and organise themselves, they have to be helped to master both technology and management techniques.[7] A new educational approach seems essential for this purpose:

> The educator must have a good grasp of the technical inputs to be used in actual production as well as in understanding the people and their society. This demands that the educators insert themselves in the actual process of production. It is in dealing with real problems and living people that an educator comes in direct touch with both technology and the people. This results in new knowledge which has originated in the reflective experience of the educator.[8]

[6]Peter Worsley, *The Third World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), pp. 8-12.

[7]'Appropriate Intermediate Rural Technology—Why and How of a Global Debate.' *How*, 3(n. 11, November 1980), pp. 17-18.

[8]J.M. Heredero, 'Technical Inputs and People's Participation,' in Walter Fernandes (ed.), *People's Participation in Development: Approaches to Non-Formal Education* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1980), p. 57.

(iii) Maintenance cost seems to have been overlooked by most projects. Only the drinking water scheme has a very high potential for continuity on this account whereas projects like health, the slum programmes and non-formal education rank low. Though some of them like the slum rebuilding project have not generated income from the participants, they have got the cooperation of other local voluntary agencies to pay for the maintenance of their staff. This can give them breathing space till they initiate an educative process and it becomes a people's project. Similarly, it may not be practical for a non-formal project to generate maintenance cost immediately. The process may lead to economic projects which may, in their turn, generate income for maintenance. Or else, the educative process itself may make the people aware of the need of being self-sufficient. This awareness would be one of the criteria in judging the success of a programme.

(iv) In order to understand the full impact of the project, one has to look beyond the immediate context of the project and study the possible development-related benefits acquired by the target population beyond the original scope of the programme. This is important from the replicability point of view. Two projects, drinking water and fishermen's education, that have combined economically viable programmes with effective education and people's organisation, seem to give the highest hope both of acquisition of new benefits by the participants and spread of the benefits to non-participants, thus becoming a model for a movement acceptable to the weakest sections. The prospects of new economic benefits seem to be moderate for the participants of the slum organisation programme but prospects of organisational benefits may be high since the neighbouring slums seem to view their achievement as possible solution to the slum housing problem and have already approached the sponsor. The education of these groups that can follow, if properly used, can lead to a viable organisation of the slum dwellers.

It may be noted that projects like the agricultural and rural development programmes that have achieved tangible physical targets attract many more non-participants than the purely educational ones. On the other hand, those with high educational and organisational content show signs of sustained benefit growth. One conclusion that seems to emerge is that for a

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project to become a development model for the area i.e. acquisition of sustenance power and other benefits by the participants, there has to be a healthy combination of the economic and the educational content. In some cases the economic content may have only a short-term goal as an entry point. In others it may be one of the results of the educational process. In either case, a balance has to be maintained between the two, if it has to become a model for the weakest sections to turn it into their own project and get its long-term benefits.

(v) One may add that barring the two projects with good mechanisms of resource mobilisation and those with main thrust on NFE, there are very few voluntary projects which can be replicated without the assistance of funding organisations. Of course, the proportion of financial assistance to the total cost would vary according to the organisation's project strategy and its main thrust. For instance, the possibility of replication is minimal in projects like fishermen's cooperative whose main thrust is on highly technico-economic schemes. Again, in cities where land is scarce and density of population is high, projects like slum organisation with single storey houses have a low chance of replicability.

However, one should not think of total replicability of any project, but of some of its aspects. Thus, the educational and organisational aspect of projects like slum organisation and non-formal education may be replicable but not their economic aspects, while the economic content minus subsidy, of projects like slum rebuilding may have something to teach others.

2. DETERMINANTS OF IMPACT

The probable determinants of development impact of the projects can be classified into two categories:

—Strategy Variables
—External Variables

(a) *Strategy Variables*

It was hypothesised that a good development strategy of any project should consist of:

—Human development rather than physical targets;
—Main emphasis on the training of personnel for continuing effort rather than on technological inputs;
—Maximum possible participation of the beneficiaries in the entire process of the projects—its origin, formulation and implementation;
—Emphasis on the tapping of local resources before asking assistance from external sources.

The findings show that the extent of development impact generated by any project is largely determined by the strategy applied. In other words, the development impact and strategy are positively correlated.

The drinking water scheme has been rating from high to very high in respect of all the strategy variables and its development impact too has been close to very high, since it has been able to combine the economic and technical, training and organisational components. The slum organisation project rates high in strategy but its development impact is a little less than high. On the basis of the preceding analysis, it can be attributed to the low attention paid to the generation of income for the maintenance of the project.

The non-formal education project which rates high in strategy seems to be rather moderate in overall development impact since two components, arrangement for maintenance of the project and catalytic impact, are particularly weak. Similarly, the case of the slum rebuilding programme would indicate that in the absence of such components as training for continuing effort, people's participation and use of local resources, the development impact of the project may be minimal. However, it is important to mention here that in the social housing projects, the nature of people's participation in the house construction *per se* is directly related to the type of housing which, among other things, is primarily conditioned by the availability of land. For instance, in situations as in this project where one is forced to opt for multi-storeyed buildings, the scope for people's participation in the implementation of housing could be minimal. But there is much scope for people's involvement at the decision-making level before construction and in the whole process of transfer and transformation.

One may add that only three out of these ten projects

originated with people's participation. In two others it was moderate and in five others it was non-existent. This is one aspect on which voluntary organisations would do well to reflect and draw appropriate conclusions. People's involvement requires trust in them and in their capacity to take their own decisions. Many voluntary organisations that get involved in development, seem to lack this trust in people and keep all decision-making in the hands of the organisers. Though some economic benefits may ensue, in the long term the people may remain only beneficiaries i.e., dependent on the organisers.[9]

(b) *External Variables*
These variables have been further classified into three categories: (i) The type of sponsor, (ii) Administrative and technical efficiency, and (iii) Project specific circumstance.

(1) *The Type of Sponsor*
This is the most crucial factor in the sense that the type of sponsor has direct bearing on the project strategy and subsequently on the administrative and technical efficiency.

The attributes of the sponsor have been divided into three groups. The most important or *basic* attribute required is the sponsor's dedication to the cause of the poor without which his being in the field of development is pointless. It may be noted that none of the sponsors of the projects studied here rated lower than moderate on this attribute. This seems to indicate that since most of the sponsors are dedicated to the cause, with suitable training and practical experience, they have good potential of evolving a participatory approach to development.

The second category of *vital* attributes relates to the sponsor's development philosophy and approach. Given that most of the voluntary project sponsors are not professionals, it would be unrealistic to expect them to have a participatory approach from the very beginning. Therefore, we have tried to find out whether they have evolved this approach over a period of time as a result of their own experience and training and exposure to available literature or to other projects. The other attribute under the *vital* attributes category is the sponsor's capacity to decentralise the project operations to allow people's particpaition.

[9]Kishore Saint, 'Development and People's Participation,' *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

While development approach can be learnt, an attitude of decentralisation often forms part of a person's character. Consequently, someone who is a centraliser by nature, may not be the type of sponsor whose work can have much development impact. The people may become dependent on him and may not really grow out of it.

The third category of attributes is of secondary importance and includes managerial skills and technical competence. These attributes of a sponsor have significance only if combined with the attributes of the first two categories. In isolation, they cannot be instrumental in developing a participatory strategy and thus remain ineffective so far as development impact of the projects is concerned. For instance, almost all the sponsors of low impact projects rated moderate or above on account of their managerial skills and technical competence. Often, such sponsors tended to equate development with an economic and physical target orientation. On the other hand, there were sponsors of projects like the drinking water scheme or fishermen's education who had little technical competence but their projects were doing well in technical efficiency since they had been able to draw technical expertise from other staff members or from local people. Therefore, this attribute does not seem essential in the project sponsor if he is capable of getting the cooperation of competent persons.

(2) *Administrative and Technical Efficiency*

The following variables have been included in this section:

—Technical efficiency in implementing the project;
—Recovery of capital for repayment;
—Maintenance of records;
—Technical supervision;
—Staff profile: (a) numerical strength; (b) qualifications; (c) technical training; (d) dedication.
—Relationship pattern between: sponsor and beneficiaries; Members of target group; project and local government bodies and project staff and project sponsor.

The findings show that like the sponsor's attributes of managerial skills and technical competence, the administrative and technical efficiency of the project in itself does not ensure development impact. Except for the health project, the rating of

all the other projects in relation to overall administrative and technical efficiency ranges between moderate and high. Nevertheless, the detailed data does reveal some significant factors. For instance, the staff of the drinking water projects has compensated for their deficiency in qualifications and technical training with their dedication and adoption of suitable development strategy. Similarly, the slum organisation project is doing well in spite of its inadequate staff strength and moderate capacity to maintain records.

By and large, the conflict between technical competence and people's participation is visible in most projects. This conflict emanates either from excessive emphasis on technical inputs at the expense of people's education or from exclusive concentration on political education to the exclusion of all economic content. When technical inputs are the key factor, technical competence becomes critical. Since the project staff often lack this competence, they bring in outsiders. This either restricts people's participation or makes them dependent on outsiders who have the monopoly of knowledge in this respect. On the other extreme are those who concentrate exclusively on political education to the exclusion of the economic content. This can either make the people dependent for the ideological content on outsiders or, when they are conscientised and organised, they may lack the economic support they require during the struggle for the acquisition of their rights.

This tension is clearly evident in the rural development and agricultural projects where concentration has been mostly on technical inputs. Consequently, extension effort as well as administration have been focusing mostly on making the technical innovations acceptable to people. This tends to become more a 'selling approach' than genuine participation of people. This is partly due to the fact that people did not understand the underlying logic of those technical inputs and, if they accepted some of it, it was more compliance than acceptance. Often the leap from traditional technology to what is considered advanced is too big for them and in the process they may lose what they have without getting the full benefits of the new techniques proposed to them.[10]

[10]For more on it, see the paper of Vandana Shiva and Jayanto Bandyopadhyay, Ch. VI of this book.

In other words, all four types of relationship between productivity and people's participation are present in these projects: low productivity and low people's participation; low productivity and high participation; high productivity and low participation; high productivity and high participation.[11] In the health project, there was low productivity and low people's participation. Participation was high in the non-formal education programme but productivity needs to be attended to. Some like the agricultural and slum rebuilding programmes, show high productivity but low participation while a few such as the drinking water scheme have combined high productivity with high participation.

Only three programmes—drinking water scheme, fishermen's education and slum organisation—attempted to face the tension between the techno-economic and educational contents—the first with more success than the other two. Four others—rural development, slum rebuilding, community development and non-formal educataion programmes—are aware of this tension but are not yet clear on the solution, though they are searching for alternatives. The remaining three have not yet concerned themselves with this issue.

3. PROJECT SPECIFIC CIRCUMTANCES

Some circumstances that are specific to individual projects have a direct or indirect bearing on such crucial project elements as strategy, type of beneficiaries, type of sponsor, etc. Only a few specific examples are analysed here. As a result of education and influence of a seminar, the low caste youth became increasingly aware of their rights and unrest among their university students came to the surface. Neither the village nor the religious structures, as they existed at that time, were geared to meet this crisis. However, the new leader of the religious institution, partly because of his outlook and understanding of the mood of the youth and partly because he belonged to a high caste but not the dominating one of the village, was able to establish links with all the sections. The youth leaders in their turn were able to establish linkages with their counterparts of other castes through the students' organisation.

One can notice in this process that the education of younger

[11] J.M. Heredero, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

elements of the 'low castes' and the organisational linkages were decisive in changing the situation. This in itself may sound surprising, for many studies have shown that the dominant groups in an area are ordinarily aware of the 'danger' education poses to their power and are careful not to let the subordinate groups have recourse to education. One of the studies in U.P. where the landholding Kurmis were able to 'modernise' their agriculture, shows that the main elements leading to their success were solidarity in their group and their success in keeping other groups, especially the *Harijans*, ignorant by depriving them of the power of education and of the possibility of oragnising themselves.

> While Kurmis attach a great deal of importance to literacy and force it on their young ones, both male and female, they have purposely not cooperated with the authorities in the opening of a primary school in the village. They do not want Harijans to have access to education. When the members of the Youth Club proposed a primary school for the village, their elders snubbed them by pointing out the implications of education, the awakening that it will lead to, and the resultant consequences when the Harijans may either stop working for the Kurmis or demand higher wages and better conditions of work.[12]

In other words, the members of the higher caste who controlled both the village and the religious structures would not have allowed the low castes to be educated. But the religious institution viewed the situation from a different point of view. Since there was a school attached to the institution, parents were encouraged to send their wards there. Education was viewed no more from the power structure point of view but as a religious duty. Thus the linkage to the religious organisation was able to provide the 'low caste' with an element of liberation i.e. education which they would have been deprived of had they been only part of the village power structure. Once in college, they were able to come in contact with students' organisations which helped them to become aware of their rights as human beings. To put it briefly, the organisational linkages of the young graduates with

[12]Surinder Jetley, *Modernising Indian Peasants: A Study of Six Villages in Eastern Uttar Pradesh* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1977), p. 56.

a students' movement and later with a national institute, and the ability of the head of the institution to respond to the situation were decisive in bringing about changes in the project area.

As in the drinking water scheme, so also in the fishermen's and non-formal education projects, the intervention of a national organisation was crucial. Both the project sponsors, being leaders of students' movements, were influenced by its thinking and changed their approach. However, the fishermen's educational programme could not make a dent in the communal situation. The main reason seems to be the situation obtaining in Kerala. The separation between various communities is so strong in this state,[13] that the sponsor would have found it difficult to experiment with the new initiatives in any community other than his own. Hence, all the beneficiaries are fishermen belonging to one community.

In the case of the community development project, all the odds were against the possibility of rehabilitation of the flood victims. The island was considered unsuitable for human habitation and neither the government nor the banks were prepared to give loans and subsidies. The people themselves, after a disaster, were in a state of dependence. As a result, they lacked the confidence required for their participation in development. In this situation, the sponsor's status as an influential leader helped him to mobilise financial resources in the form of donations from India and abroad. Once he began to work, both the Government and the banks began to have confidence in the project and extended their support by way of loans and subsidies. Thus the organisational linkages of the sponsor, unlike those of the participants in the drinking water project, were critical in the formulation and implementation of the project.

Similar analysis can be made also of other projects to show that the specific situation of their society had positive or negative influence on people's participation. We have already mentioned the dormant infrastructure of the slum organisation project which could be re-vitalised by an enlightened sponsor acting as a catalyst. The fishermen who have a long history of

[13]G. Ramachandra Raj, 'Ideological Conflict: An Analysis of Nair-Catholic Relations in Kerala,' *Social Action*, 26(n. 1, January-March, 1976), pp. 8-26.

dependence on moneylenders and middlemen could easily transfer this dependence to the sponsor or the technical personnel with the difference that the former were exploiters while the latter are their benefactors. While this led to their economic improvement it did not necessarily lead to their human development.

To put it briefly, one thing worth noting in the analysis of project specific circumstances is that whatever the circumstances of a project, if it has a sponsor with dedication, adequate development vision and minimum required knowledge and abilities, its chances of making a significant impact on the development of the underprivileged sections of society are high.

4. THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR'S INSTITUTION

When an instituion can create conditions necessary for people's participation depends very much on the outlook of the project sponsor. A few institutions may be helpful in helping people to take their own decisions. In fact, many of the above projects became people's programmes because of the ideological and other support from a national organisation. However, by and large, institutions do not go beyond a charity or efficiency approach. Hence if the sponsor's approach is charity-oriented, as in the health project, then he has the whole tradition of the institution to support him.

In some cases, the institution itself may be neutral. Then the outlook of the sponsor is decisive. Such, for example, are the community development and fishermen's cooperative projects both of which are working through institutions and think primarily in terms of economic growth. While both community development and fishermen's cooperative projects see the need for decentralisation and people's participation, their concept of development is principally economic and efficiency-oriented. This has been an obstacle to greater participation of the people.

In many cases, the main institution may only provide the occasion but the sponsor may get real support from other institutions that can be said to have organisational marginality in the sense that though they are official bodies, their activities and dynamism may not be enjoying legitimacy in the official organs. The sponsors of the non-formal and fishermen's education projects, for example, belong to educational/religious organisations

which maintain them. But their ideological support comes from a students' movement. The material sustenance provided by the main institution enabled them to get involved with these marginal organisations.

Finally, in some cases, the institution not only supports the innovative approach, but may itself change with the project, as in the drinking water and slum organisation projects. While the latter started with a charity approach and slowly changed to an educational outlook, the former started as a result of the involvement of the participants. In the latter, the project itself changed, and the process brought about some changes in the outlook of the sponsor and his institutions. The institution changed marginally, since the slum-dwellers felt more welcome in the school which was till then an island among them, and many more of their children were able to go to school. Much greater changes were brought about in the institution of the drinking water project where the people put pressure for the beginning of the project, used it as a means of organising themselves and finally took control of the social institutions, thus forcing the head of the institution to become their ally. In other words, the educative process that the people are going through becomes an important factor in changing the whole structure, including that of the institution.

One conclusion that emerges from this is that voluntary organisations can create new innovative models more easily under ideal conditions such as the combination of a sponsor with a development-oriented outlook and total support from the institution. However, these ideal conditions are not essential if the sponsor himself has the right outlook and can get the minimum support at least from the institutions with organisational marginality and if his own institution can provide him with an opportunity to get into development work.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to identify the nature and dynamics of people's participation in development based on a recent evaluation study of ten voluntary development projects. This study shows that most voluntary organisations studied here have moved beyond the charity orientation which was the characteristic of

the voluntary sector for a long time. While most projects in the sample had focused on the expressed needs of the weakest sections of the population, they varied considerably in the extent of people's participation.

Much of this variation in people's participation can be explained through the type of strategy and model of development adopted by the project. Where techno-economic elements alone were emphasised without any commensurate educational, awareness-building and training components, the participation of people was restricted. Similarly, the starting point of the project had some impact on catalyzing people's participation. When discontent was the entry point, there was greater likelihood of people's participation than when philanthropic concerns were the starting point, while disaster could be used as a tool for people's involvement if the sponsor had the right outlook.

The development impact of the project was closely linked to people's participation. While physical targets could be achieved with or without any effective participation of the beneficiaries, the continuity of the project beyond the stage initiated by sponsors as well as the spread and growth of development benefits, both intensively and extensively, depend on effective participation.

The paper also enumerates the impact of external variables, like the type of sponsor, administrative and technical efficiency and project specific circumstances on people's participation. Finally, it illustrates the linkages between the role of the supporting institution and people's participation. In sum, this is an effort at setting some empirical bases for people's participation in development programmes initiated by voluntary organisations.

If voluntary organisations want to be effective in this line, they have to define their role very clearly. Otherwise, they can put obstacles on the way to the growth of the people. Many of them seem to think of themselves as being in competition with the government and duplicate the existing infrastructure. An essential condition for innovative approach leading to people's growth is that these agencies have to re-define their objectives and view themselves not as development organisations but as pioneering groups that have to create innovative, viable and replicable models of development as alternatives to the present approach whose benefits have not reached the most disinherited sections. Any replicable model would require the maximum utilisation of

existing infrastructure such as the local organisations especially those belonging to the 'target population', local techniques of production which may have to be updated, not replaced, indigenous cultural expressions and financial and other resources of the people, banks, government etc. The innovation does not have to be in getting new resources but in a new approach that builds up the self-confidence of the people and awareness of their rights, in such a way that they view the existing resources not as a favour bestowed on them but as a right that they have been unjustly deprived of by the vested interests.[14]

In this process, it is important for the organisations to go beyond a 'project' approach to which many seem to limit themselves. The causes of injustice are national in character and even while trying to find a solution to a local problem, its national linkages cannot be forgotten. Moreover, it is true, as many studies have shown,[15] that by and large only caste or community based housing, credit and other societies have been the most successful, or when they are multi-caste based, either one caste comes to control them or a negotiation between groups leads to division of power on a caste-basis.[16]

Voluntary organisations have to face this problem and have to find alternatives to the communal approach if the people have to get fully involved in their own development. Otherwise there is always the danger of a few leaders with vested interests exploiting the communal loyalty of the people and dividing them in order to keep the *status quo* intact.

Linkages between voluntary organisations may be one of the alternatives. But these linkages cannot be provided by organisations that pretend to coordinate the voluntary sector as a whole but in practice come to be controlled by a few financial, communal or political interests. The initiative for these linkages has to come from the grassroots-level groups that keep a national perspective while working on a local problem and feel the need of working in coordination with others.

[14]M. van den Bogaert, *The Pancheshila of Development* (New Delhi: AFPRO Monograph, 77/1).

[15]G.S. Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1957), p. 212.

[16]B.S. Baviskar, *The Politics of Development—Sugar Cooperatives in Rural Maharashtra* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 149-165.

Briefly, development of the people has to be the criterion of gauging the success or failure of projects. This requires a balance between the educational and technical components. Initiatives in this direction are a challenge to voluntary organisations that want to help the people to grow as human beings.

3

The Methodology of Participatory Evaluation

Viji Srinivasan

When one mentions evaluation of development projects as a specialised task, one is talking of a collection of ideas, developed or acquired, technical aptitudes and skills that have been diversified over a period of time. It is taken for granted that these ideas and aptitudes enable us to think through our experiences and to reduce subjective impressionistic thinking to objective findings. These objective findings, it is assumed, can be shared with other individuals and groups working in development but it is no benefit sharing subjective impressionistic thinking. Evaluation has therefore become a specialisation which enables both sharing of experiences as well as modifications to one's own development strategy.

TRADITIONAL EVALUATION

According to the dictionary, to evaluate is 'to examine and judge the worth, quality, significance, amount, degree or condition.' Discerning and committed development workers are deeply interested in evaluating their projects. All desire to improve their performance and evaluation of some kind is certainly part of this process. It is not only development workers who are interested in evaluation but almost all men and women. One might evaluate the effect of introducing technology on women's lives;

or the lending rules of nationalised banks on poor women; or the effect of community forestry schemes on women who spend a large percentage of their time on gathering firewood; or the use of chemical fertilizers. Men and women even evaluate friendships. They also evaluate the power structures in a community. Evaluation is really one sector of the process of human survival. However, this would not be considered evaluation in the above professional sense.

It is not only the individual men and women who evaluate, but societies and communities. But individual or collective evaluation is not necessarily objective. Evaluations by communities are often coloured by ethnocentrism. Evaluations by individuals are circumscribed by limitations in perception.[1] Individuals or communities may present failures as successes for political reasons, may defend their efforts with emotions rather than with facts, may subconsciously avoid facing up to disconcerting and distinctly disturbing realities. For all these reasons traditional evaluators would think that recognising evaluation as a specialisation will help immensely in increasing the objectivity of evaluation. While they would ignore the data provided by this type of evaluation, participatory evaluation would begin with this perception as the starting point of a process.

Evaluation is sometimes confused with research, but traditionally, they are different in functional terms. Both the research person and the evaluator may share a university background. But the research persons's aim is often academic. He chooses a subject which has personal interest while the evaluator is responsive to a development programme or activity and to the needs of the decision-makers of that programme or activity. The research person can often work at his own speed while the evaluator often has to come back fairly soon with feedback to the decision-makers. The research person is at liberty to choose a subject with theoretical relevance and significance and will be interested in reducing the interaction of other elements in order to have a perfect design. The evaluator on the contrary, has to keep practical relevance in mind and look for practical significance keeping in mind the necessity of producing a realistic design.

[1] For more on it, see Andre Beteille, *Inequality Among Men* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 18.

The research person and the evaluator are themselves judged differently. One looks at the research person to see if there is a contribution to human knowledge. But the evaluator, to be acceptable, has to give the feedback necessary for decision-makers.

Thus evaluation in development effort as differing from research is intended to examine development experience objectively, systematically and with precision in order to help decision-makers maintain development efforts at a certain level of usefulness to the community or to accelerate development.

> However, a good evaluation study may serve immediate project needs and also contribute to human knowledge, thereby becoming what we have called research. Conversely bad research may teach us less about human nature than a good evaluation study.[2]

Almost all definitions of evaluation have decision-making as pivotal point. It is "the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analysing information in order to report summary data useful to *decision-makers* in selecting among alternatives."[3] It is meant "to set up indicator values to targets and the subsequent reporting of the indicator values along with their deviations from the targets, wherever applicable, to the relevant *decision-making* levels to enable them to take necessary action.[4]" It is "a method of detecting strengths and weaknesses of programmes and of recommending measures for improvement to *decision-makers.*"[5]

One can notice that the decision-makers form the target group in all these definitions. Evaluation is not an end in itself. The material it brings forth has to be useful for making decisions. It must clarify areas of decision-making, establish criteria for

[2]H.S. Bhola, *Social Change and Education* (New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1976), p. 36.

[3]Marvin C. Alkin, as quoted in H.S. Bhola, *Evaluating Functional Literacy* (Amersham: Hulton Educational Publishers Ltd, 1979), p. 164.

[4]V. Govindarajan, A.K. Mitra and L.K. Sawhney, *What Young Managers Think* (New Delhi: All India Management Association, 1979), p. 146.

[5]*Social Development Through People's Cooperation—Report of Four Regional Workshops* (UNICEF, 1980), p. 162.

judging the performance of a development project and must also assist in setting up standards for the decision-makers. Decision-makers need help from evaluators in order to choose between various alternatives.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

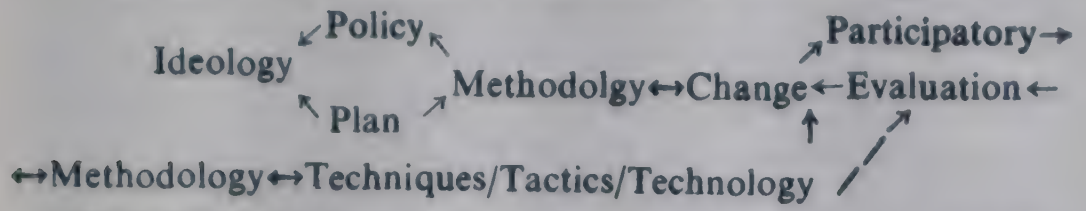
It should be clear by now that even in the traditional type of evaluation the professionals are only helpers and that decision-makers are the nodal figures. *But who are the decision-makers?* On the answer to this question depends the real role evaluatory research can play and the methodology to be followed. The decision-making apparatus may be dominated by outsiders to the village community who may form part of the elite. They may be government officials or even well-intentioned activists, but still outsiders. Even if the decision-makers are part of the village community, what does one mean by the term community? Are the decision-makers the elite of the village, the rich, the powerful, exploiters in one way or the other? Even if the decision-makers represent the very poor, the disadvantaged, the oppressed, they may perhaps be representing only men in a male-dominated village society.

In other words, an evaluation has to question the local leadership role and ensure the total participation of the weakest sections. The village does not always have a homogeneous community. A few upper caste leaders may dominate and exploit the others. These leaders may participate in the evaluation and decision-making process. If evaluation does not question this leadership role, then it can become instrumental in strengthening the existing exploitative order by providing the external or internal leaders with better ways of continuing their domination.

If the internal leadership pattern is to be questioned, then the evaluator has to start by questioning his own role. He cannot remain any more an outside specialist but has to become part of the group. He cannot think any more of an 'objective' report but of self-evaluation with the participation of all the people from among whom leaders have to emerge. The external evaluator becomes only a facilitator of a process and his methodology changes accordingly.

If the people have to get involved in the process then evaluation has to be placed in its total socio-political context and the

social relations are to be analysed. To limit ourselves to socio-economic programmes in its socio-political context, a development project is comprised of an ideology to technology chain.



Henceforth the term community is used to mean a relatively homogeneous community. Every relatively homogeneous community has an ideology. A fisherfolk community has its own ideology, so does a tribal community. If the decision-makers of a development project form part of the community, or if outside activists involve people from the community to be decision-makers, the policy or plan for change and the methodology to be used to carry out this plan will emerge from the ideology of the community. After the change process is set in motion, the decision-makers from the community will want to or will be encouraged to want to evaluate the development project. *This is participatory evaluation*—it is part of the ideology-technology chain. After this evaluation the methodology may need modification. The modified methodology will be formulated as techniques/tactics/technology. This technology would reflect the community's ideological commitments.

All these are two-way processes. In the whole process the community's ideology itself might get altered. For example, a technology which gives a better status to women might change the ideology of the community vis-a-vis women. There are also possibilities of short circuits in the ideology-technology chain. Participatory evaluation and technology might modify each other directly, so might change and technology.

When this ideology-technology chain does take place, development also takes place in its real sense. But the ideology-technology chain is an ideal seldom attained. Further, the community's ideology may fail to fit in with, or may even be in opposition with, national ideology. National ideology may itself run against stated aspirations. The point that needs to be emphasised here is that in any case the ideology-technology chain *cannot work without participatory evaluation*.

METHODOLOGY

Participatory evaluation has been promoted by Paulo Freire, although many others have been interested in developing it.[6] Freire's methodology needs to be modified to suit the Indian situation since otherwise there is every danger that the Scheduled Castes and women will be left out. When modified to include these groups, the following steps in the methodology of participatory evaluation would emerge.

1. The external evaluation team looks at all previous evaluations and research irrespective of the methods used.
2. The team then delimits the area of action geographically.
3. The team then identifies popular and statutory institutions, groups making a special attempt to identify Scheduled Caste and women's groups in the area selected and talk to the leaders of these institutions/groups.
4. The evaluation team then holds a dialogue with these formal leaders and tells them that they would like to hold discussions and work together with *all* people in the community including specially the disadvantaged groups viz, the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.
5. With the agreement of the formal leaders,[7] the evaluation team holds meetings with the formal leaders and also with the people who are involved with these institutions. Sometimes ways may have to be found, of bypassing or neutralising the formal leaders if they are the exploiters.
6. The evaluation team discusses with the community, arrangements for meetings wherein groups of, say, thirty people come together on a daily or weekly basis for discussions. These meetings involve all the members of the homogeneous community and may last over a few months, depending upon the numbers involved. The main thing is to obtain the perceptions of the whole community about their local situation, help them to

[6]Paulo Freire, *Address to the Institute of Adult Education*, (University of Dar-es-Salam, July 20, 1972).

[7]Paulo Freire seems to assume that evaluation teams can get the leaders to agree to work with all people in the community. In the Indian situation, one would need to think about what could be done if the formal leaders did not agree to involve the whole community. This problem would be much greater if the upper caste leaders assumed a leadership role. From the beginning concentration will have to be on the oppressed groups.

become aware of the real situation and their potential to be change agents.

7. Social justice, government's role in development, employment and income-generation, women's issues, untouchability, and many other topics can be discussed—but all in terms of the situation and in the context of the concrete problems of that particular community. One of the members of the community should be encouraged to chair such meetings—particularly members of the disadvantaged groups.

8. When the groups feel that they have exhausted the topic relevant to them, each of them puts their findings on paper—the reporters being members of the community. Then, as many members of the community as possible will meet at a general session, where there is collective discussion of each group report. Provision has to be made for oral reporting if the community does not have any literate person as it happens in some villages. This may create in the community a need for adult literacy or for the formal education of children.

9. Sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists can be associated with these discussions. But they are external elements who play only a supportive and facilitating role. Hence they should be careful not to force the pace of change. Initially some aspects such as separate meetings of men and women may have to be accepted or a subordinate role tolerated but only as a temporary measure.

10. The external team now makes a critical inter-disciplinary study of the collective discussions in the presence of the community i.e., gives it feedback. The various levels at which the community perceives reality should be looked at, and their implications worked out. However, this is to be given as one of the opinions and not as a judgement and should lead to further discussion.

11. The people now draft a proposal for a methodology for subsequent action which will lead to suitable techniques/tactics/technology. The evaluation team can help the people in supportive role.

THE PROCESS

Participatory evaluation is a process meant to raise the consciousness of people. It is a common search for prescription for

action, by external evaluators and people working together. It seeks to transform reality in the very process of defining it and is certainly useful at the community level. However, it may not generate all the data that might be needed by administrators and policy-makers. In such situations, participatory evaluation can be used in association with other types of evaluation, or as the statement of this workshop says, "these local efforts at participatory research need to be subsumed by the macro-level researchers who will translate them into the language of those who today justify anti-people policies through their superior knowledge. This communication in the language which policy-makers accept, will pressurise them in some way to change the policies which marginalise the weakest sections in the name of development."[8] In other words, the purpose of participatory evaluation is to change policies, not to strengthen the policy-makers.

The steps outlined above for participatory evaluation certainly depict an ideal situation which rarely exists. In India women or members of the Scheduled Castes may not be allowed to participate in the meetings of the community. The participatory evaluation team has to modify its strategy according to the realities of the situation and, as mentioned above, should be prepared for a step by step approach.

The ideology-technology chain also represents an ideal situation. In reality, it gets broken in many places. The main points where it gets broken are between 'methodology' and 'change' and then between 'methodology' and 'techniques/tatics/technology.' This is because at both these points outside inputs (e.g. information about available technology) are required. Often these inputs have to come from government officials or technocrats who, oftener than not, assume that they have superior technology and information which they want to offer or impose on a captive audience which they consider inferior.

Therefore we are forced to come to the conclusion that participatory evaluation alone is not enough. The whole ideology-technology chain would need to be strengthened at various points.

[8] *Statement of the Workshop on Participatory Evaluation* (Ranchi: Xavier Institute of Social Service, March 9-12, 1981), No. 6.

SOME ILLUSTRATIONS

My experience with development efforts has been particularly in South India where many voluntary agencies are doing participatory evaluation *without knowing its theory or formulating that what they are doing is really participatory evaluation.* The questions that arise are: How important is theory to development workers? Should they know that what they are doing is participatory evaluation? Should they know that development could consist of the ideology-technology chain (or any other theory of development)?

One of the answers is that a development project, though its aim could be as narrow as development within a small geographical area, has much wider implications. One successful development approach could have a ripple-effect. It could offer a model of development strategy that is replicable. In the context of replicability, it is certainly important that persons doing pioneering work in various kinds of development projects, theorise and formulate their experiences, so that net-working is made more efficient. In this context, it is important that development projects which have tried participatory evaluation in one form or the other share their experiences.

Besides, the causes of underdevelopment are rarely local. Hence, if any long-term solution has to be found, it cannot be merely at the local level. With a view to finding out the process and replicability aspects, I shall give below four case studies of women's organisations.

I. *Working Women's Forum, Madras*[9]

The President of the Working Women's Forum, Mrs Jaya Arunachalam, had long experience of relief work. During flood

[9]Apart from field visits in September and December 1980 and January 1981, the following sources were consulted:

(i) Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, *Working Women's Forum—Potential for Development* (New Delhi: unpublished paper, 1980); (ii) Jaya Arunachalam, *Working Women's Forum at a Glance* (New Delhi: AVARD, 1980); (iii) *id.*, *Report of An Experiment in Leadership Training* (Madras: Working Women's Forum, 1981); (iv) *id.*, *Cooperative Bank of Working Women's Forum* (Madras: unpublished paper written for Working Women's Forum, 1981); (v) *id.*, *From Destitution to Leadership* (Madras: Working Women's Forum 1981); (vi) Pushpa Sundar, *Women: Problems, Perspectives and Programmes for Development* (New Delhi: unpublished paper, 1979).

relief work in Madras city in January 1978, Jaya discussed with a number of slum women their opinions about flood relief. Their response surprised her. They were not at all interested in flood relief—their pressing need was credit. They were flower and vegetable vendors and were in eternal bondage to money-lenders who lent them small amounts of money at 12½ per cent per month. If they were to carry on their work after the flood waters subsided, they required not relief but non-exploitative credit.

Working Women's Forum, an organisation of self-employed women, was born out of this need. It was registered in April 1978. By April 1980, the Forum had 5000 women members in Madras city, 3000 of whom had received loans from two nationalised banks for a wide variety of 63 occupations ranging from selling flowers and idlis to tailoring and mat-weaving. The record of repayment of the bank loans is very good because the service came as a felt need of the women, not as an imposition. By 1980 there was an effective network of four supervisors and 110 women group leaders representing 110 slum areas. In April-May of that year Jaya once again had extensive discussions with those leaders. From the dialogue developed two main ideas:

(i) The starting of a cooperative bank of their own. Members of the Women's Working Forum find it difficult to deal with unimaginative bank staff; procedure-wise, the women and their group leaders have to spend several days to get a small loan of Rs 100. They felt that their own bank could undertake other services such as purchase and distribution of raw materials, conduct market surveys, help in upgrading skills etc.

(ii) Training of 60 community health workers, each of them having responsibility for 100 families so that 6000 would have preventive health coverage.

Both these ideas have now taken shape. 2500 women have already contributed Rs. 21 each as share capital in the cooperative bank and further seed money has been obtained from a grant from Appropriate Technology International. 60 leaders have been trained in preventive health, funded by the Family Planning Foundation of India and assisted by trainers from the Institute of Rural Health, Gandhigram. The enthusiasm and confidence of these workers is obvious. One can notice in

them a feeling of pride, solidarity and oneness with the Working Women's Forum.

The reputation of the Working Women's Forum has become very widespread in Madras city. New groups want to join it and more and more nationalised banks want to route their loans through the Working Women's Forum.

II. *Composite Programme for Women and Pre-School Children, Kerala*[10]

People's participation and involvement is the vision of every person engaged in rural community development. Yet, in practice, in India's villages this rarely seems to happen. A pleasing exception to this rule is the composite programme for women and pre-school children (CPWPC) in Kerala. This programme is a happy fusion of the efforts of the development and health Department of the Government of Kerala, CARE, the UNICEF, the 1601 registered *Mahila Samajams* which are really voluntary agencies at the rural level.

It has been estimated that 62.2 per cent of the population of Kerala live below the poverty line and in this context the CPWPC was conceived by the State Government and CARE in 1975. UNICEF began its inputs in 1977. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been just one more of the hundreds of government-CARE-UNICEF programmes which make very little impact on the people. But CPWPC had a group of dedicated and courageous women who were capable of taking decisions and organising themselves. The external inputs played only a supportive role and were provided when the local groups felt the need. Hence people did not become dependent.

The concept of the CPWPC was the upgrading of existing feeding centres to focal points, the *balwadis*. The *balwadi* would, through the local *Mahila Samajam* (women's associations) see that a package of services with many components would reach poverty-stricken pregnant and lactating women and infants and pre-school children of the locality.

The idea of running the *balwadis* through the *Mahila Samajams* has been the strength of the whole scheme. Under the programme, the registered *Mahila Samajams* had to acquire five cents of land. CARE gave a grant of Rs 3,000 and wheat

[10]Source: UNICEF South India Office Records.

worth Rs 400 towards the construction and running of the *balwadi* and the Government of Kerala Rs 1,000. The estimated deficit of about Rs 2,000 was to be met by the *Mahila Samajam*.

This was just one more target-oriented programme. There had to be 400 buildings per year for four years. However, the *Mahila Samajams* enthusiastically vied with each other and a number of them have built larger and better-type buildings which did not care for the target but fulfilled a felt need of the local community. Since it was their own programme, the women did not restrict themselves to the amount fixed by the external agency. In many cases the *Mahila Samajam* collected a lot of contributions in cash and kind (rice, jackfruit and tapioca) which they sold to build the *balwadi* and this success really gave them confidence for further development.

After the buildings were constructed, the *Mahila Samajams* selected a *balwadi* teacher from the community. The Government of Kerala pays Rs 25 every month to the *Mahila Samajam* towards the salary of the *balwadi* teacher. But a few *Samajams* raise additional funds to pay her more. The teacher conducts nursery classes for 40 children in the *balwadi*. The members support her a great deal in her activities and the teacher really works as a community worker. Thus, though she gets a nominal salary from the Government, she is not considered a government servant as in other places but is part of the community.

The forty 3-5 year old chidren in the nursery classes are fed twice a day. Apart from this, the malnourished children of the area below the age of 5 and the pregnant and lactating mothers are fed once a day. These mothers and children are chosen by a committee of which the president of the *Mahila Samajam* is also a member. *Mahila Samajam* members are in charge of cooking, serving and washing as well as maintaining the records and supervising the activities. They do these tasks energetically in rotation without payment and it is a source of inspiration to see rural women running *balwadis* all over the state by themselves.

The health department, in coordination with the department of development, carries out periodic health check-ups. However in 1977, in a series of meetings that began with the village and continued at the district federation levels, the women said that they were much more interested in income-generating projects than even in the periodic health check-ups. As a result,

discussions were initiated by the development department with UNICEF and a plan for income-generating projects was drawn up. Thus financial aid programmes for the mothers formed a very important component of the scheme and 10 mothers in every *balwadi* have started goat-rearing. The mothers are chosen by the *Mahila Samajam* and when the goats give birth, the kids have to be given back to the *Samajam* which gives them to other mothers in rotation. This scheme is working very smoothly and a source of additional pleasure for everyone is to witness the excitement of the children who have a goat at home. Other economic programmes like the backyard poultry rearing are run on the same principle. A portion of the eggs are given back to the *Mahila Samajam* and used for feeding the *balwadi* children.

At the next series of meetings, the women expressed their need for more information on nutrition and child health. Again, the development department initiated discussions with UNICEF and a programme for women's camps was drawn up. Now, these camps are an extremely popular feature of the CPWPC. All the *Mahila Samajams* conduct two-day women's camps twice a year where exhibitions are held and nutrition and child health is discussed. UNICEF provides assistance for each of these camps. The community contributes towards the other expenses of the camps. The very fact that the community involves itself actively in such a programme establishes the credibility of the CPWPC and its standing in the area. One can think of a lot of communities where such an activity would be scoffed at with 'What are they going to learn? Why spend money on this?'

Another commendable aspect of the programme is that it is really reaching the most needy. There is a certain spirit in the CPWPC centres which is difficult to describe—a feeling of security and dignity and quiet harmony among those who work there and those who benefit from the programmes. The financial aid scheme and the women's camps particularly were put in at the psychologically opportune moment by UNICEF as a catalytic agent. But the main architects of this success story are the women of Kerala and their sustained efforts at making a better life for themselves.

III. *A Women Workers' Cooperative*[11]

'I have managed to stay out of debt for nearly ten years now. It is definitely possible to live without getting into debt,' says Chokkammal. 'But for that we need a steady income and a fund where we can borrow amounts in times of emergency and repay in small instalments.' 'As we have,' she adds.

Chokkammal lives in the slum area of Desianagar in New Washermanpet in North Madras. She belongs to the Adi-Dravida community and was completely illiterate till recently. She is a batik artist in 'Swallows Handicrafts Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd. (Ind. 940),' situated close to her home.

In 1965, the Swallows, Sweden and Denmark, a voluntary agency, started a Batik Centre as part of their urban community development project, to provide employment opportunities for untrained, unskilled, illiterate Harijan women in their project area. The Batik Centre which started with 17 women has now grown into a big handicrafts centre employing 80 women and last year it exported goods worth Rs 6 lakhs.

In 1967, when the 17 women were earning Rs 100 a month, the Swallows representative wanted to start a programme of literacy, nutrition and health education. They had elaborate talks with the women and their husbands. What emerged was that their immediate problem was their indebtedness to moneylenders living in the same area. They were all in debt ranging from Rs 500 to 1,000 and were paying an interest of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per month. Therefore, their whole salary was being paid out as interest. The Swallows representatives then thought of legal aid—their opinion was that the moneylenders should not be repaid the capital as they had already been paid three times that amount as interest.

The Swallows representatives perceived the moneylenders wholly as exploitative in nature. But the women's perception was different. They saw them as part of their community and as a social institution serving the function of providing credit

[11]Sources: (i) Bjorn Eder, *On Women and Successful Cooperatives* (Madras: unpublished paper written for the National Cooperative Union of India, 1980); (ii) Viji Srinivasan, *The Swallows Handicrafts Industrial Cooperative Society at Desianagar* (Madras: Case study written for UNICEF New York, 1980); (iii) Pushpa Sundar, *Women: Problems, Perspectives and Programmes for Development* (New Delhi: unpublished paper, 1979).

in an emergency. They therefore perceived their interest arrangement as a social obligation which they did not want to negate. There was also a practical consideration. 'We may refuse to pay them now and get out of it. But who will lend us money in our next emergency?' they said.

Therefore, a new solution had to be found in the form of a 'Debt Releasing Fund' out of which the 17 women repaid the amounts to the Fund at the rate of Rs 7 per month without interest. Life insurance and savings schemes were set up. Out of the 17 women, 13 have stayed out of debt till 1981.

In 1979, the handicrafts centre was registered as a cooperative. The Workers' Council manages it completely with the help of various committees, such as Production, Planning Committee, Disciplinary Committee, Purchase Committee, Quality Control Committee. The Social Committee manages the original Debt Releasing Fund and sanctions loans to the workers, to be repaid in instalments at very low rate of interest. The Social Committee decides the workers' priority needs and there is no outside interference in sanctioning loans. Briefly, what had started as an economic project set up by an aid-giving agency has been taken over by the women and has been used as a tool for organising themselves. The main reason for this change is that unlike many other programmes that do not go beyond the economic content, this project allowed the participants to keep evaluating their work and change according to their need.

At the next round of discussions, the workers asked for information about running a cooperative. This was arranged and the workers had training in functioning as an independent cooperative. Discussions with the help of experts were held about political systems, procedures of representative democracy, economics of handicrafts units, problem-analysis, and decision-making. Literacy and numeracy classes were in great demand, for at this stage they felt the need of reading, writing and keeping accounts.

That is how Chokkammal learnt to read and write—but only in 1980 when she felt the need, not in 1967 when the Swallows representatives wanted it.

IV. *Training for Self-employment as part of Urban Development*[12]
The Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA) became officially responsible for land use planning and control in the Madras Metropolitan Area in 1974. Since 1977 it has also been responsible for implementing the World Bank assisted Madras Urban Development Project (MUDP). This Rs 470 million programme has several components, inc'uding sites and services, slum improvement, small scale business including training for self-employment, maternal and child health, water supply and sewerage, road and traffic improvement, transport and technical assistance. The first four components are directed specifically at the urban poor while the other components have been designed to take their needs into consideration. Road and traffic improvements for example, include the building of cycle tracks and footpaths, improved bus services and construction of passenger shelters which are expected to benefit the poor.

Some years ago one who had studied the programme gave the following report:

> The housemaid course deserves special mention. It is run by a voluntary organisation which for many years has run a one-year full-time course training 30 young women as live-in domestic workers. The programme has a contract with employers which assures graduates of minimum wages, standard working conditions and hours, and numerous other benefits. This programme has been so successful that there is a long waiting list of prospective employers, and graduates usually start out earning 50 per cent to 100 per cent more than the minimum called for by the contract. The MMDA programme run by the same organisation trains part-time domestics in basic cooking, nutrition and child care skills; it lasts three months and requires attendance for only three hours a day (10 a.m —1.00 p.m.). This schedule allows trainees to continue their previous work while in training, and participants are given an additional Rs 30 per month stipend as incentive.....Because the course itself is mobile, it can be moved from one slum area to another with ease to keep up with changing patterns of demand. The cost of training, including equipment, salaries and stipends, was only Rs 352 per trainee.[13]

[12]Source: (i) MMDA Progress Report for the quarter ending June, 1980; (ii) Field visit in December, 1980.

[13]Andrea Menefee Singh, *Women in Cities: An Invisible Factor in Urban Planning in India* (New Delhi: unpublished paper, 1980).

The writer was fully justified in making this assessment at that particular phase of the programme. Later developments, however, did not reflect the initial optimism about this particular project, because a new process had set in. Unlike most government departments, MMDA had a dynamic Member-Secretary who was ready to sit with the people in the slums instead of an air-conditioned office and encouraged his staff to do the same.

As a result, the community development organisers of the MMDA who were in charge of the Housemaids Training Scheme, held group meetings in the slum areas in which they were working. They found that older married women already working as housemaids were not interested in upgrading their skills for a variety of reasons. The main reason was that many of them were working in three or four houses and felt that upgrading of skills would mean that they would have to work only in one house. They would lose out not only in salary but also in coffee and leftover food. The younger unmarried girls, educated up to middle school level, did not want to be trained to be house-maids. They felt that this would be beneath their dignity. They wanted to be nurses.

Thus the community development organisers of the MMDA developed nurse-aides training for these younger unmarried girls. This was successful. All the girls found employment immediately in privately-run clinics. The nurse-aides training course continues to be the most successful component of the self-employment scheme because it responds to a need of the slum-dwellers.

However, later developments in the MMDA make us question many aspects concerning the assumptions about this process. The dynamic Member-Secretary has been transferred (or promoted) and the staff members whom the MMDA had till then encouraged to become part of the slum community, have now been transferred to the Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board which has not shown an equal amount of dynamism. While analysing these changes, one obviously wonders about the reasons for these transfers and their consequences on the slum community. One begins to wonder whether some vested interests affected by the new-found strength of many slum orgainsations were responsible for these 'promotions'. All that one can do at this

stage is to wait and see the direction the MMDA will take. That will help us decide whether our optimism about the process is justified or not.

CONCLUSION

This paper has tried to study the participatory evaluation approach when put in the context of the ideology-technology chain. The case studies indicate that if taken in the proper direction, it helps the people to grow as a community and can become part of a liberative process. They also show that outside workers have got a catalytic role to play. But what is obvious is that no project can become part of a process unless the local people make it their own.

As far as the outside workers are concerned, a genuine participatory evaluation has to help them to better understand their role and the purpose of development not as merely economic growth but as a social, political and economic process that touches the lives of men and women. It should also help them to differentiate between various types of processes. Some processes may be manipulative of people and might become very effective modes of making them dependent on the authorities and exploitative structures. In such a case, participatory evaluation only becomes a popular phrase co-opted by the vested interests for their own purpose. A genuine participatory process has to be responsible for changing the realities that surround the people. It is a healthy combination of knowledge and action in which the people are the real actors.

The case studies given above also show the danger of outside support destroying the organisation if it is withdrawn too early. An outside element becoming a genuine supportive factor is seen in the 'Working Women's Cooperative' while some other cases like the MMDA scheme raise questions about the genuine strength of people's organisation and the way in which vested interests can break them by forcing the supportive organisation to withdraw its support too early i.e., before the organisation is strong enough to resist pressures of the established powers.

All that one can say is that participatory evaluation shows a certain direction but not the only possibility. It has to be used as a tool that has to function within a given socio-economic set up and has to change its methodology according to the need of the people.

4

Liberative Communication for True Participation

Kishore Saint

After the experience of the last two Lok Sabha elections, the intellectual community in India is prepared to entertain the possibility that the rural people of India, far from being a moronic mass, have a mind, personality and a judgement of their own which they are capable of exercising for crucial decisions such as who shall run the affairs of the state. It is the intellectuals who do not have a mind of their own, are constantly dependent on conceptual imports and seek legitimation of their work outside their milieu. These historic events have revealed once again not only the gulf that divides the educated elites from the rural masses but they have also shown how inadequate and faulty are the instruments the intellectuals use for analysing, describing and explaining the Indian reality.

There are several reasons for this. The modern social sciences modelled on the natural and physical sciences, are developed on the premise that there are universal laws which govern the character and functioning of human individuals and societies. They also assume that there is one or other path of social evolution which every society is destined to follow. It is not difficult to see the imperialist underpinnings of these assumptions. The 'advanced' societies which are further along the road of social progress are assumed to have superior knowledge and wisdom without which the 'backward' societies cannot move forward.

Always the case of technological differentials is cited to prove the point. Yet what holds validity in this field cannot be simplistically and mechanistically applied to the social sphere. In any case, even the fundamental technological and scientific wisdom of the advanced societies is suspect, since it has resulted in a crisis of survival of the human species and its ecological support systems.

The frameworks of knowledge and methods of study about individuals and societies have a powerful cultural bias. They are instruments not only of description and explanation of reality but in their policy impact, they become instruments of the creation of new social reality. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that these disciplines of knowledge be appropriate to the social reality they are dealing with. A great and highly evolved sociocultural tradition like the one in India is not a mere museum for traditional anthropological studies. It is a living reality with powerful generative strengths which have a distinctive character. The Indian ways of perception, understanding, organising and doing have an evolutionary potential not only for the Indian situation but also for mankind as a whole. There is recognition of this outside India. But within India, the academics whose task it should have been to understand the sociocultural and psychological characteristics of the Indian reality and to identify its special generative strengths, have chosen the less arduous path of remaining faithful 'chelas' of their western mentors and masters. The closest some Indian intellectuals come to giving a 'national' interpretation to this imported knowledge is to divide their own society into 'advanced' and 'primitive'. Till they are shocked into the awareness of the knowledge of the 'primitive' through events such as the ones mentioned above, our intellectuals continue to consider our villagers ignorant.

A pre-requisite of correct understanding is the designing of suitable instruments of observation, description and understanding; in other words, preparing analytical tools and a language of discourse pertinent to the particular reality. This difficult work has not been done, at least not in the academies which have continued to replicate and refine redundant and irrelevant theories and methodologies. It is my contention that describing and explaining behaviour, perceptions, thought processes and attitudes of people in India in terms of Pavlovian

or Skinnerian behaviourism or Freudian or Jungian psycho-analysis or Piagetian psycho-structuralism is like describing the Hindu Pantheon of beliefs in terms of Christian or Islamic theology. No matter how logical and consistent it may be, it can only be a grossly distorted depiction of the actual phenomenon. Perhaps it is in this context that a well-known economist once remarked that 'only when the illiterate Indian peasants begin to articulate their insights born of their concrete experience and common reflection that a beginning will be made in authentic indigenous social science in India.' Until that happens, it might be worth our while to remove our academic blinkers and let the light of common sense and intelligent speculation inform our deliberations.

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Participation takes place not only through communications but also in communication. No social existence is conceivable without a network of communications. These play a vital role in social functioning, maintenance and change. Modes of communication and participation relate to varieties of social relations and structures. They encompass private conversations, folk media, advertising, *melas*, traditional gatherings etc. They can range from informal, casual exchanges to highly complex institutionalised and ritualised forms of conveying and receiving messages.

In the highly structured Indian society, the institutionalised and ritualised forms of communications are particularly important. These exist as major systems of communications which are maintained with great regularity and permanence. Many of these coincide with the major events in the individual life-cycle such as birth, marriage and death, and with seasonal and cosmic cycles. Most of these are on an intra-community basis. The traditional community maintains itself in and through these communications. Socio-religious observances and celebrations like marriage and death feasts, *prasadis* and *jati panchayat* gatherings, are occasions for intra-group communication while the *melas*, *hats*, markets, village *panchayat* gatherings and great religious *melas* like Kumbha, are the venues and means for inter-community exchanges.

An Illustration

To illustrate the intricate multidimensionality of traditional modes of participative communication, a celebration in Udaipur, the festival of Gangoch in an *Adivasi* community, is described below.

Nimechkhada lies north of Udaipur. It is a small *Adivasi* (tribal) hamlet that nestles against the hills of Nimechmeta. Its inhabitants settled there some 30 years ago when their lands were taken away to make room for 'progress' in the form of a Railway Training School. One of the village elders is a prominent Bhakta, a member of the reformist sect amongst the Bhils. Last year he led a group of eleven from Nimechkhada and other Bhil hamlets around Udaipur, to make a pilgrimage to Haridwar. They all went not as individuals but as representatives of several hundreds of other *Adivasis* and carried the remains—*asthis*—of their deceased elders to be immersed into the holy river.

Today, under the leadership of Bherji, the prominent Bhakta, they were celebrating the festival of Gangoch. Bherji is well known to us as he has been associated with some of the projects *Seva Mandir* has undertaken. He invited us to participate in the celebrations. We (my family and I) reached his house in the village in the afternoon. Already there was a large gathering and people were still arriving: women dressed in gay, traditional attire and displaying all the finery they possessed, older men in clear white dhotis and a scattering of young men in bush-shirts and pants. The festivities were heading towards the climax. The last of the pitchers with coconuts were being distributed. My wife and daughter were given one each and invited to worship at the family shrine of Bherji.

In the compound, seated on a carpeted dais, was an obviously important Maharaj, quite young but presiding with dignity over the proceedings. I was asked to share the dais with him. I declined the honour and busied myself with taking photographs. Soon all the pitchers had been handed out and the procession began to form. The women held the pitchers and the coconuts on top of their heads. Some in the lead carried special pitchers containing germinated barley. An elephant with a howdah on top had been brought. It was duly worshipped, *tilaked* and garlanded. The Maharaj, the chief guest, climbed into the howdah and a

standard with a striped flag was handed over to a bearer in the howdah.

After this, the movement began in earnest with a band in the lead followed by the elephant. Men, women and children who had been waiting all over the village poured out in columns and joined the mainstream. Everyone walked at the elephant's pace. Women sang songs appropriate to the occasion. Quite a few began swaying as they walked and had to be supported. In high, congenial spirits, this community of several thousands made its way to Fatehsagar led by the eleven men who had been to Haridwar, each carrying, as a precious treasure, a sealed metal pot containing the waters of Holy Ganga. Arriving at the lake, the eleven put these *Gangajalis* in a circle, said ritual prayers and opened the seals. Meanwhile, the men made a chain up and down the steps to the water's edge. In quick succession the empty pitchers carried by the women were handed down, filled with water and brought to the place where the opened *Gangajalis* were lying. Each filled pitcher was blessed by the Maharaj and a drop of Ganga water added to it.

When all the pitchers had been filled and thus treated, the procession started back to the village but a qualitative change had occured in the atmosphere and mood. All the women carrying the filled pitchers were swaying now. They were carrying the spirit of Ganga and it seemed that the Goddess had taken possession of their spirits. They were beyond themselves in communion with the primeval elements of their racial memory and heritage. Much faster than on the outbound journey, the procession returned to the village. After some rest, 'prasad' was distributed and the thousands began to depart, taking with them a part of the whole that made up their kinship and community. Those who had come from afar would stay the night, most of which they would spend in devotional singing and dancing, and would leave before daybreak.

Nature of Communication

This was Gangoch, a celebration of once in a lifetime which brought together thousands of kinsmen and kinswomen. Through physical presence, inter-personal exchange, ritual and ceremony, song and dance and partaking of common food, the organic bonds of the community had been renewed. In the process, the

stature of leadership had been demonstrated and legitimation obtained by secular and religious means. It was a big occasion worthy of a big man who had made himself bigger in the process.

It should be observed that although that event occured within the municipal boundaries of Udaipur and had involved thousands of people, it received no attention from the communications managers of contemporary India. No scholars, journalists or media men were present on this occasion. As far as they were concerned, it was a non-event, for it belonged to the tribals who are considered ignorant and superstitious.

This points to the gulf that exists between the two realities in the Indian situation. The contemporary communication systems function, by and large, as a world apart from the traditional systems of communication. They comprise the various mass media, e.g. radio, films, TV, newspapers and publicity materials, advertising, and the systems of extension and educational services. These systems rely heavily on imported technologies and theories of communication for their policy and functioning. A major portion of these is controlled either by the state agencies or by private business as in the case of press and advertising. To a limited extent, through private educational institutions and voluntary adult education agencies, local community-based systems of communication have been evolved. But these are invariably overshadowed by the state-controlled and industrial systems.

The audiences and clientele of these systems are mainly urban. With the exception of agricultural extension service and advertising related to modern farm inputs, the rural orientation of the mass media is minimal. Yet, despite their limited coverage and cultural distance, their impact is considerable on the rural areas. Their message-dissemination is multiplied a thousand-fold through interpersonal interaction. The 'Indira wave' and the 'Janata Hawa' are phenomena of a highly communicative culture where messages are carried by word of mouth and travel with the travellers, are discussed, analysed, commented upon in the teashops, panshops, coffee houses, in buses and in trains.

In other words, the primary means of communication in the country still remain what are called traditional. The so-called modern mass media have only modified but not replaced them. The radio and press have given larger regional and national

dimensions to these inbuilt processes, but have not altered the basic character of people's reliance on the word of mouth and the speaker's standing for information. The people, even though illiterate, are by no means passive recipients. They have a highly developed capability for assessing their validity and veracity by perceiving the tonal quality, the gestures, the posture and the expression on the speaker's face. What is heard is further subjected to scrutiny with those who are trusted or in groups and is only then accepted or rejected.

This is not to say that truth always triumphs. But that begs the question: whose truth and in whose interest? Much of contemporary communication is extremely one-sided: from the centre to the periphery. There are urban centres for collection, generation, selection and ordering of information controlled by the state and the ruling elite within it.

In our post-feudal system, they are at best paternalistic and at worst authoritarian. Some observers regard modern communications in even more sinister terms, as an assault on the indigenous culture and personality of the people. The non-governmental centres of communication are either tied to the promotion of particular factional interests or, if objective, they are too abstract and remote in their concern. In the latter category are the academic centres which are usually esoteric and often trapped in conceptual schemes that have no relevance to the Indian rural situation. There is a glaring lack of media of communication and centres of knowledge-generation which reflect people's perceptions, understandings, aspirations and which can act as avenues for developing people's self-concept and identity in contemporary terms. Only this approach to communication can help the people to liberate themselves from the weight of deadening tradition, on the one hand, and from the distortion and manipulation of elite-oriented communications on the other.

Because of illiteracy and ignorance in modern times, the masses are subject to manipulation, control and exploitation by those interests who control the means of communication. At the same time, they enjoy a certain degree of immunity and protection from control by virtue of their deep immersion in tradition which has specific as well as universal dimensions. It is in this paradoxical situation that potential has to be sought for modes of communication that can be liberative in the

dual sense referred to above: liberative from negative, regressive tradition and from contemporary, oppressive modernisation.

LIBERATIVE COMMUNICATION

What does this mean and entail? Can it be done? Who is to do it? These questions are addressed in the rest of the paper.

Although internationally attention has been focussed on this question by the Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire, indigenous liberative modes of communication were very much the concern of both Gandhi and Tagore. Both of them wrote prolifically and generally in their native idiom, in one case through journalistic forms and in the other through literary and musical expressions. In both instances, they expressed the feelings and aspirations of a wide spectrum of the Indian people; what they said gave hope and courage to millions and inspired them to heroic deeds. All over the country, through the national schools, through ashrams, through the private press and through grassroots organisations, messages were transmitted, consulations effected, strategies developed and actions undertaken. It was a national movement but it had very important regional and cultural regeneration aspects. The independence movement in India was in every sense a multidimensional 'cultural action for freedom,' to use the more topical phrase of Paulo Freire, which evolved highly original modes of communication specific to the Indian rural situation. The prayer meetings, the *padayatra*, the non-violent *satyagraha*, the fast, the spinning sessions are peculiarly Indian forms of contemporary social and political communication and participation.

Liberative communication as an expression of cultural action for freedom has several important characteristics. In the first place it is organised on the basis of faith in the people. In fact, it is the expression of people's own desires and attempts to be articulate, to share, to participate and to become organised. The life situation of the masses is sometimes characterised as a culture of silence. Liberative communications are those which help to give voice to the millions and enable them to speak their selves. They are highly region and culture specific and replete with the symbolism, imagery, motifs, commonsense and idiom of the particular area.

Of late, the term 'conscientisation' has been used to signify

communications with liberative intent. It means awakening to one's predicament and situation and becoming energised to deal with the problems that confront one as a member of an oppressed group. In the Indian context, the concept of 'chaitanya' which implies awareness, sensibility as well as alertness towards nature, life and society, has a far richer content than 'conscientisation.' Traditionally, the development of 'chaitanya' has been the spiritual prerogative of a few enlightened individuals around whom various sects have evolved, usually drawing followers from the oppressed classes. These have undertaken activities of reformist and liberative nature in a sporadic and isolated manner. With Gandhi and Tagore, this dimension acquired a secular and national significance and resulted in historic socio-political action. However, it retained its spiritual moorings with their attendant tendencies towards individualism and obscurantism.

We need to rediscover and reactivate the meaning of this powerful evolutionary impulse in the Indian character. It needs to be salvaged from the blind alleys of self-serving esotericism and delusionary obscurantism, and channelised into fresh cultural action for freedom. The beginnings, of necessity, have to be with the individual selves amongst those who have emerged from the masses and yet have not become alienated from them. These individuals have to deepen and strengthen their 'chaitanya' through experience, work, study and reflection and in the process, liberate themselves from the constraints of kinship, caste and 'nowkari'. They have to relink themselves with the people, becoming reimmersed in their lives, learn from them and help to develop their awareness and sensibilities towards liberative social and cultural action. There can be no blueprints for this effort, there can only be a broad strategy and approach which must be constantly reviewed and revised. Nor can this be undertaken under patronage and sponsorship of any king. It has to be *sui generis*.

CONCLUSION

This paper has emphasised the role of people's participation in participatory research and evaluation. In doing so, it has underscored the intricate relationship between communication and participation. The nature of communication influences the nature

of participation of people. If communication is based on alien concepts and methodologies borrowed from the West, it only tends to alienate the common man. It thereby stultifies his participation. In fact, such alien communication is used to further the interests of the elite and perpetuate the oppression of common people.

The indigenous forms of communication need to be rediscovered as much of it has been destroyed by the 'modernising' process. These forms, wherever they still exist, especially in rural areas, have a powerful impact on the people. The examples of prayers, devotional singing and dancing, folk theatre, *melas*, religious events and rituals etc. have been shown to have a liberative potential in terms of people's action. These liberative communications have to be made an integral part of participatory research and evaluation. Only then will the ordinary people and the oppressed groups participate in them in the fullest sense. Only then can they initiate liberative action.

5

Training for Participatory Evaluation

Desmond A. D'Abreo

Development programmes are multiplying all over the country with an incredibly rapid momentum. Funds from the country itself, whether from government or private sources, and from abroad, are easily made available for those who want to launch out on development programmes. But the impact of these programmes is far less in proportion to the resources poured into them. The reasons for this disproportion are numerous, but an outstanding one is the lack of proper and regular evaluation of these progrmmes.

There is indeed evaluation, but it is carried out in a one-way, downward communication. It is carried out from outside, and concentrates mostly on the upper strata of the personnel implementing the programme, and only obliquely touches the real people at the grass-roots, who, as a matter of fact, should constitute the real agents of their own development. In most programmes, rural or urban, the masses are more the object than the subject of their evaluation, so much so that they look on an evaluation as a 'checking up' by outsiders on the agency which is implementing the project. The people are neither involved in the programmes as planners and agents of their own development process, nor are they involved in any evaluation of their programmes.

Today the emphasis is gradually and steadily shifting in some development programmes to involve people in planning and

implementation of their own development. A dialogical relationship is being built up between people and programme-initiators. An important part of this dialogical relationship is the evaluation that is done in collaboration with the people, not on or for them.

However, in order that the people be capable of participatory evaluation, it is essential that they be trained to do so. They have to see the importance of evaluation, its goals and limitations, its requirements and its components. They must be aided to develop the skills required for fruitful evaluation. This paper will discuss one such programme—the training method we follow at 'Development Education Service' (DEEDS). Without pretending to propose it as a model, we hope that the principles we try to follow will be of help to others.

TRAINING FOR WHOM?

Community development work must be implemented by the community, rather than by any external organisation or outside persons. The people in a community are endowed with the abilities to think, organise themselves and make their own decisions. It should be the planning and implementing agency of its own development processes. However, it is not possible to involve the whole community equally in any development process, however grassroots-oriented that programme might be. It is commonly accepted that whenever any change is conceived for a group of people, however large or small, there is only about five per cent who are ready followers of the plan for change. Around fifteen to twenty per cent will follow after a certain amount of persuasion and reflection. Thirty or forty per cent will hesitate till they see concrete results of the changes from the new plan. Another twenty per cent will follow when they see that the rest are all toeing the line. The remaining minority will not bother whether there is change or not and are ready to adapt to both ways.

To try to train persons indiscriminately from such a diversity of attitudes would be a waste of time and resources, besides causing a diffusion of enthusiasm among those who might be ready for training and new action. Hence, it is important to work along the lines of a 'nuclear growth process'. The training should first concentrate on those five per cent of people who are ready to accept education for change. These would be persons

who are dissatisfied with the present situation, who have a certain degree of commitment to the community, who are acceptable to at least some part of the community especially the poor and the oppressed, and who are found to have a certain perseverance. It is these people that the animator or field worker should try to select through a process of identification with the community and personal rapport. He should concentrate on training this core group intensively. After their training is over, the trainees will in turn select those persons from their community to whom they are acceptable and train them. This process will create a sizable number of people who could affect the thinking and behaviour of the larger community and be the starting point of change process that can lead to a mass movement.

The preliminary training of the core group who constitute the cadre of local activists, should focus on critical awareness-building process starting from a deep analysis of their community's basic felt need. This training can give them a vision of development, a clear ideology and understanding of an effective approach to be adopted in the development of their community. It should also give them the requisite skills of group discussion, working in collaboration with others who build a strong team spirit, elements which are essential requirements for participatory evaluation.

It is only after these activists have been identified and trained through a process of reflection and action that they can be exposed to a training programme for participatory evaluation. Without this prior training and experience in the field, the effectiveness of any training for participatory evaluation would be very limited. It would end up being a mere academic exercise which would not bear much practical fruit, since it would not have the foundation of a real experience of working in community development. In brief, it is our contention that there can be no training in participatory evaluation unless there has been a training and active experience in genuine community development.

There is another consideration that needs to be made when conducting a training programme on participatory evaluation. Generally, when a training programme for development is conducted, participants come from different organisations that are already involved in some form of development activity. We

feel that it is not fruitful to give such a mixed group a training in participatory evaluation. In the first place, these are generally development workers, not activists. Secondly, they are individuals from various development agencies. However, much as the training might have changed their attitudes, values and ideas, it cannot result in participatory evaluation of their programmes, since on re-entry, they realise that others working in the programme back home have not changed, and their ideas on participatory evaluation will be accepted neither by the other personnel of the implementing agency nor by the people at the grassroots. We therefore feel that it is much more practical and meaningful to restrict the participants of a training programme on participatory evaluation to activists working in the same community.

NATURE OF TRAINING

We believe that the usual training programmes conducted in most training centres are not suitable for training activists who are to be involved in participatory action and evaluation. According to traditional lines, training (and education, for that matter) is seen to be transfer of selected information, knowledge and skills from the trainers to the trainees. The trainers teach, the trainees are taught. They are mere objects of the training, neither given the opportunity to choose the programme content or methodology, nor the chance of being consulted about it. The trainers enforce their choice and are active, while the trainees are given the mere illusion of acting through action of the trainers. This kind of training, whose content, methodology and ambiance are decided beforehand by the trainer, are basically hierarchical, undemocratic and non-participatory. The outcome of such a training is unlikely to lead to participatory action and evaluation.

After such a training programme, the trainees can only be expected to adopt the attitudes and roles of the trainers in their own work. They also become 'trainers' in their relations with people, deciding for them, planning for them, not taking them into their confidence about the programme and its phases, and worst of all, considering them as people to be taught because they are ignorant, unprepared and incapable of taking the responsibility for their own development.

Being aware of all these serious shortcomings of the traditional training processes, we realise that the training for participatory evaluation must found itself on a totally different orientation. Since our ultimate aim is participatory evaluation, the *first* requisite of a training programme for activists should be that it be a process of group interaction and formation of team spirit. Group discussion and group work facilitates the acquisition of attitudes, knowledge and skills which activists need for effective functioning as persons who identify and work with the people.

Secondly, evaluation demands an open mind which implies questioning and not taking things at their face value. Hence, this attitude must be an outcome of training. The training programme and its setting should create an atmosphere where the trainees discover knowledge for themselves in a situation of group dialogue, where everyone participates with a questioning and open mind. It is important that this open and questioning attitude be manifest not only in the trainees but also in the trainers. This, as we have indicated earlier, implies a basic and deep humility and patience.

It is in this area that the greatest difficulty is encountered in initiating this type of training. Most training or educational programmes that begin with a sincere attempt to work on learner-oriented participatory lines, gradually degenerate into lecture sessions that are primarily teacher-oriented. This is because it requires much more imagination, preparation and hard work to have dialogical learning. It demands a real knowledge of the trainee, his centres of interest, his stock of knowledge which is to be the starting point of the educational process. It involves a keen personal observation and closer interpersonal relationship between the trainer and the trainees. It is far easier to prepare and give lectures. Besides, a lecture can cover a lot more material which will require more time if attempted in a dialogical discovery process.

The objective of our training is participatory research and evaluation. For such activities, it is necessary that those who participate in evaluation draw out the conclusions through a process of personal reflection on the data they receive, observe and verify. They cannot be satisfied with merely collecting statements and accepting them without personal thought and assessment. They can be prepared for this reflection by the

methodology of training offered to them. We must realise that education is not what we give to the trainees, not a banking system in which we deposit a certain amount of data in their minds, but rather a process in which their potentialities are drawn out and their experiences reflected upon in order that they arrive at their own vision and convictions with regard to development and change.

It must be admitted that there are a lot of difficulties in attempting this style of training. To begin with, the trainees, who are from the grassroots, are not prepared for this kind of exercise. Most of them are semi-literate, or if they have been to school, are products of an educational system that gears people to be objects, at the receiving end and with no allowance for initiative in the learning process. Much less are they prepared to think and to control what and how they learn. Hence, their evaluatory powers are totally neglected and are generally atrophied. To break down this passivity and the audience/performer relationship requires lot of practical activity in which the trainer is neither controlling nor being the focus of attention.

This leads to the *next* requirement of such a training programme for participation in evaluation. The distinction between trainers and trainees is reduced to the barest minimum. The role of a trainer is to be a facilitator who creates an environment in which all the participants can express themselves freely, can ask questions, express doubts, attempt solutions and learn without any hesitation or inhibition. The trainer too realises in such a process that he is a learner with others. The reality is discovered, analysed and studied by all in common and is not handed down by one individual to the rest. The relationship between trainer and trainee has to be a genuine dialogical one so that it can later on be realised in their work of evaluation. No longer should they make a dichotomy between the evaluator and the people as objects of evaluation. They will make evaluation a process of dialogue.

This identification of trainer with trainees is enhanced if both share in the living conditions and avoid disparities of food, accommodation, etc. These things make a lot of difference, for the activists who come from a poorer stratum of society will be encouraged by these external details to lose their fears and inhibitions and will gain in self-confidence. This equally is a very

tangible way of deepening the attitude of democracy and participation.

A *fourth* requirement of training for participatory evaluation is that it aims at acquiring and strengthening a set of values which differ totally from those underpinning the present social system. The training must incorporate the values that underly participatory evaluation—values of sharing, cooperation, humility, open-mindedness and patience to learn from the people, objectivity in judgement, justice, equality, team spirit and honesty. The acquisition of such values is essential for working among the oppressed, for helping them to bring about a radical change in the society and for an objective and constructive evaluation of their programmes. If these values are not preached but exercised and actively emphasised during the training programme, new energies will be created or released in the trainees as well as in the trainers, to act with conviction and courage in their various struggles at different levels. If the training programme is patterned on democratic, participatory and non-hierarchial lines, it will already set the foundation for the acquisition and deepening of many of these values. A concrete example of sharing and team spirit, of dialogue and equality will be manifested when the participants are involved in decision-making about most, if not all, aspects of the training programme.

Finally, it is important that a training programme for activists should enable them to develop a questioning and analytical mind in order to have a scientific approach to the understanding of the reality around them. The starting point of such a programme will be the reality as experienced by the participants in their life and work. From the known they will proceed to the unknown. For this purpose, the problems and issues to be discussed should be determined not beforehand, but in consultation with the participants according to their needs and expectations.

METHODOLOGY OF TRAINING

The training methodology outlined here consists of two parts: one a foundation training as development activist and another a specific training in participatory evaluation. Both are described below.

A. *Foundation Training*

Before delineating the methodology for a training programme for Participatory Evaluation, it might be helpful to describe briefly the method used in the preliminary training for the core group of local activists. The development worker, after he has selected these people, initiates the programme by some kind of ice-breaker, through which the participants come to know one another, with details about their backgrounds, family, cultural taste, interests, etc. Through this exercise the foundation of a good spirit of solidarity is laid right from the beginning. A number of sessions are spent in discussing the various problems and issues of the community of the poor and oppressed of which they are a part. The outcome of these discussions is the discovery of their basic felt need. Around this felt need an educational process is initiated. The problem is studied not in an academic way, but through an analysis of the facts that each one can bring from his own experience, the feelings they have about such realities and what they think are the basic assumptions on which these issues or problems are founded. These assumptions can be social, economic, cultural or religious. Their roots are probed and their underlying values are assessed in the context of the concrete experience of the participants.

Through a brain-storming session, the group then tries to find the possible solutions to the problems. Each solution is then evaluated in terms of the factual situation, the feelings and reactions it would evoke in the community and the basic assumptions it would imply. From this discussion, a final solution which is likely to be implemented by the group in a practical way and in the immediate present, is derived.

After this process of reflection, the group plans and launches out on an action that flows from it. This action is by the group as a whole.

The next session begins with an evaluation of the action, of the part played by each individual and of the whole group. In this evaluation, a new problem may surface. This then becomes the new topic of the session, and the process is repeated, with group action always following every session of group reflection.

It has been found by experience that such a process may last about three to four months. But during that time, because of their working and dialoguing together, the group has developed

a strong 'espirit de corps', and a new awareness with a collective commitment to work for and with their fellow oppressed and poor people in the community.

With such a preparation, the training programme for participatory evaluation becomes easier, because much of the spade-work has already been done. However, with groups that do not have this preparation, we find it necessary to go through a number of preliminary exercises to acquire and strengthen the skills and values described earlier. What follows has such a group in mind.

We have found that a group of sixteen to twenty participants is ideal for training. It is not fruitful to work with a larger number of persons as larger groups become too impersonal, and the building up of strong relationships between the trainers and the participants and among the participants themselves becomes more difficult. For this reason, we also insist that the programme should be a residential one in which everyone lives and works together without any restriction of time-tables.

In the very first session, as an ice-breaker, the participants, after introducing themselves in detail to the group, describe their real experience in their work. After making sure they are all aware of the main purpose of the training programme, which is participatory evaluation, they break up into small groups in which they discuss in detail what are the questions to which they look for answers, the problem they encounter in their work, the orientations they would like to find with regard to their thinking and action, and the questions they have about evaluation, its need, its role and its methodology. From the results of these discussions, the trainees are together able to work out a syllabus for the training programme. Obviously, for a logical sequence to be given to this syllabus, the trainers are in the best position to offer a basic structure into which all the questions, problems and needed orientations can be fitted. But even here, we have found that consultation with all the trainees helps in designing a structure which sometimes turns out to be better than the one we had in mind.

It has been noticed that when total trust is put in the group who have come for training, they start becoming responsible for their thought and action. The freedom to think, act and relate to each other makes them assume a serious responsibility. In

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these initial sessions, especially if the group has not the intensive training referred to earlier, some participants talk freely while others find it very difficult to express themselves in more than a couple of sentences. But nobody is passed over. Each one is encouraged to speak, and the group waits for him in a friendly, not a benevolently sympathetic, manner. Only if the silence in the group seems to become oppressive to the shy participant, he is passed over. These initial sessions help the participants to learn to be attentive and to respect other participants.

The trainer, who is to function as a facilitator, must keep to his role of asking questions to carry the discussion and analysis forward, to draw people out to talk, to think and to take active part in the discussion. He must exercise patience when ideas or facts may be put forward that do not seem relevant. He must realise that they might be of some importance to the person narrating or expressing them. He must encourage the participants to see the cause, inter-relationship and the method of analysis. Obviously, this might take a lot of time. But hurry is dangerous. With enough time, the details of the content and the process of analysis become clear and whatever is learnt is retained by the participants.

One of the main requirements of evaluation is the clarification of the goals of any development work. In order to have those goals clearly in mind, it is necessary to have a right vision of development, a definite stand on what development action should lead to and the approach to be used to achieve this goal. The initial phase of the training programme should lead to the acquisition of this vision necessary for a competent evaluation.

Generally, the first topic decided upon in the commonly drawn syllabus is a study of the reality of underdevelopment. This study must begin with the village or area in which the participants work. Small groups of participants each select a topic like housing, nutrition, employment, education, agriculture, inequality of possessions and income etc. They prepare charts or posters on each of these topics including whatever statistics they can collect.

It will be found that the vast amount of data collected will not be synthesized by all the participants, for each group will be absorbed in the collection and discussion of data on the particular aspect of their choice. Hence there is need of a session

in which all the participants become aware of the various aspects of underdevelopment discovered, and find an underlying unifying cause of underdevelopment manifested in the different aspects. Therefore, there should be a presentation of the data on each topic by the groups through their posters, charts, collages as well as by interviews, symposia and other forms of communication that they choose. It is found especially fruitful for deepening the communication abilities and mutual understanding among the participants if the data is presented in one of their own folk media like *villupattu*, *kathakalakshepam*, village street drama etc.

Discussions are subsequently held on the content of these presentations, leading to an analysis of the socio-economic and political structures of the village or area of work. The participants look at their own place of work historically and analytically. They can reflect upon their village as a system. They are put probing questions; in trying to find answers, they begin to think, make connections and understand some important connections and concepts about the origin and history of society, the distribution of the means of production, the relation of man to land, to water, cattle, etc. In these discussions, the questions come mainly from the trainers, though ideally they should come from the participants themselves.

From here the discussion moves on to the macro-level. In situations where the group of participants is fairly literate and where sufficient amount of pertinent literature is available in local languages, a macro-level study can be done and presented by the trainees in group research sessions. They can divide themselves into small groups which are provided by the training team with books, periodicals and newspaper cuttings from which they can collect data on the Indian situation with regard to the topics on which they did macro-study of their own area. In order to enhance the participation of the whole team, the data found can be written on large poster-size sheets hung on the walls, each showing one topic being researched like housing, nutrition etc. In Tamil there is a rather good amount of literature on the macro-situation. For a group that is largely illiterate, this data can be supplied through charts, pictures, collages and posters.

A discussion follows this confrontation with reality on both micro and macro-levels. The end product of this discussion is

the realisation that this reality reflects a vitiation of the socio-economic system. The group then goes on to a study of the causes of underdevelopment from the historical, political, social, economic and cultural angles. This can be done through group discussions on a specially prepared paper on the subject. For illiterate groups, this is done through a simple talk, reinforced by diagrams and pictures. Some simulation games like adaptations of 'Star Power' have also been found useful to drive home the point.

Once there is clarity on the reality of the prevalent oppression and its root causes, the group proceeds to delineate an ideology or concept of development and change. The participants are encouraged to write down, if possible, their own vision of what the goals of all development work should be. These individual visions can then be discussed in the whole group. It is necessary for activists to have a more or less clear understanding of why they want to work with the poor and what they want to do. However, it is not right to force a particular ideology on others, nor to blindly accept any one prevalent ideology as perfect and fully satisfactory for all times and situations. But, even while allowing for differences of ideology, it is possible to derive from the group some essential common elements. To start with, all should be committed to uphold the values of equality, justice and freedom, and to make a clear judgement about the present socio-economic system as unjust, oppressive and unequal. They must understand that oppression can only be removed by a basic restructuring of the whole society and the false values on which it is built, like profit motive, competition, rivalry and self-centredness. They must realise that this restructuring can only come through the oppressed struggling against the existing system in a coordinated and united manner.

We hold that this section of the training programme is of absolute importance, for no one should involve himself in development unless he has a clear, though not rigid, ideology. This ideology—his vision of what development should be—is the norm from which he will be able to plan his work and to evaluate the programme in which he is or will be involved.

With this background, the group will be ready to examine various actual programmes and analyse the approaches of each to see if each one really touches the root cause of underdevel-

opment and works towards development on the societal and individual levels. This presentation of various approaches can be done through case studies, taped interviews with people working in a programme, role play on a specific approach by the participants, posters, collages, charts, etc. Through the elimination of various approaches, the group will arrive at the only effective approach that both hits at the real root cause of underdevelopment and works towards a genuine development. They will realise that this is an education to total development implying a liberation from exploitation, oppression, communalism and selfishness towards a fullness of life, freedom, responsibility, solidarity and love. On the community level, they will accept that it means changing their value system, so that there will be sharing of opportunities and resources. This does not rule out economic growth programmes, provided they are seen by the people themselves as just a tactic in the strategy towards the total restructuring of society.

From here the course moves on to the need, methodology and techniques needed for a critical awareness building educational programme and for organising the people. If the course is conducted in the place of work, the inputs gained in this section of the training programme are practised in the evenings with small groups of local people. If the course is in a training centre far from the area of operation, it is so built that there is concurrent field work, through regular and, if possible, daily evening visits to a local community or to local groups of rural or slum dwellers. The participants visit these people in small groups or in pairs and attempt to practise what they have got during the training programme. The danger, however, of making the local people 'guinea pigs' must be assiduously avoided. This can be done by telling them beforehand of the visit of the trainees that will take place during the coming training programme and giving them the full purpose and plan of this programme. They then become sharers with the trainers in the programme. If the training centre had a series of training programmes, it has been found helpful to preserve a detailed record of what is achieved by each training batch. This record must be studied by each training batch going to a designated section of the local community so that one gr p of trainees does not repeat what a previous group has dc but progresses from it. If the trainers have

built up a relationship of equality with the trainees, they too do these visits together with a group of participants. They will thus also be able to ensure progress and not a repetition of approach or introduction which will be rather tiresome to the local people. However, the trainer must retain his position as member of the group, and not as one who, because of his previous knowledge of an experience with the local population, takes over the role of leader and teacher.

In these daily visits, the participants spend the earlier part of the course in establishing personal relationship with the local people. Through their conversation with them, they can obtain the necessary socio-economic and political data for the structural analysis of the community. When they are reflecting on and discussing the need and methodology of education, they should try to identify the basic felt need of the community and plan an educational process on the need. It may not be wise or practical to try out the methodology of critical awareness-building on the local people. What we find more fruitful is to have a participant conduct a session in education with the other members of the group as 'learners'. To avoid this being artificial and fictitious, a real problem of the group could be taken as the starting point of this educational exercise. The process is then evaluated by the whole group and principles of conducting educational programmes can be then derived by the participants.

As the dynamics of the group's participation develops, the trainees should take turn in chairing the various sessions of the training programme. The programme is divided into a number of periods of equal length. For each of these periods, a drafting committee is formed from among the group. Every night this committee submits a summary of the day's ideas and experiences. The summary made by them is put in a cohesive form and hectographed and distributed to the trainees as a major section of the 'notes' during the training programme.

B. Training for Evaluation

All that has gone before is a neccessary basic foundation for learning the technique of evaluation. In order to evaluate a programme, it is important that the evaluator knows the root causes of development, having made a structural analysis of the society in which the programme is operating. He must have a

clear vision of the goal of development and of the most effective approach that will arrive at this goal. When this has been achieved, he has the right preparation to analyse the very process of evaluation, its need, methodology, and its requirements.

As will be observed, evaluation is built into the whole training programme as we have described it. Right from the outset, the participants are exercising themselves in participatory evaluation by the whole group, of the situation of underdevelopment and oppression around them. The case studies on the various approaches to development are group evaluations of programmes that are actually being implemented. The process of education that is attempted among the participants has no effect unless there is a group evaluation of each exercise. Besides, this evaluation is an integral part of the whole programme. On the personal level, there is a constant evaluation going on. The trainers living, working and relaxing with the trainees, are constantly getting feedback from the trainees about different aspects of the programme. Every evening, some time is spent in which the whole group evaluates the inputs and the activities of the day, and proposes changes, if necessary, for the next day's programme.

At the end of the course, all together make a general evaluation of the programme. This is done in various ways, either in small group discussions, a written report by each read and discused by all, or by a questionnaire provided to each and followed by an open discussion.

The exercise of evaluation that has been actively put into effect constantly during the course is synthesized in a series of discussions, on the nature of evaluation, the importance and practicality of participatory evaluation, its requirements and its goal and objectives. This is finally made concrete by the participatory evaluation of a few case studies of programmes that are grassroots oriented, whose objective is the restructuring of society through education and organisation of the masses.

The participants, at the end of the course, should have the realisation that evaluation is necessary and must be done not by some outside agency but by the grassroots people actually involved in their own development process. There may be need for an outside person or agent who can help them with this evaluation from time to time. This may complement their assess-

ment of that programme. While they, as agents of their own programme, can understand it better and be more involved in it, the outside evaluator may bring greater objectivity and insights from other programmes that might be of great use to them. However, the main agents of evaluation, even when conducted with the help of an outside agency or individual, is they themselves. We do believe that this is the right attitude and orientation for a healthy and useful participatory evaluation.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the above description, training for participatory evaluation is related to and built upon a foundation training in development work. The inter-relationship of two training programmes were highlighted in the earlier sections. This paper has emphasised that trainnig for effective participatory evaluation is possible only on a foundation of training for effective development work.

The foundation training consists of field activists' conceptual and empirical understanding of problems of development and underdevelopment, their attempt at practising some of the concepts they have learnt and an educational intervention for community mobilisation and organisation. It focuses the participant's attention on developing a model of social change and development prior to launching a programme.

This paper has also pointed out that the methodology of training for participatory evaluation has to be consistent with the principles of participatory evaluation itself. Since participatory evaluation implies openness, questioning, participation, control and action, the contents and methods of training should include these aspects. This calls for a particular type of trainer role which is distinct from the teacher role. In this training, the trainer and the participants are co-learners. It is in this sense that the methodology of such a training programme requires close attention.

6

Participatory Research and Technology Assessment by the people

V. Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay

> No matter how ignorant a person is, there is one thing he knows better than anybody else, and that is where the shoes pinch on his own feet and because it is the individual that knows his own troubles even if he is not literate or sophisticated in other respects . . . .every individual must be consulted in such a way, actively not passively, that he himself becomes a part of the process of authority, of the process of social control, that his needs and wants have a chance to be registered in a way where they count in determining social policy.
>
> JOHN DEWEY

MODERNISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ALL THAT

The most conspicuous element of India's post-independence history of planned development has been a commitment, bordering on obsession, to modernisation. This concept of modernisation has been taken to be synonymous with the introduction of modern technologies. An analysis of technology transfer to post-independence India clearly indicates that the modern technologies have never been indigenous improvements of our own system of production, in agriculture or industry, but have always been relatively outdated technologies borrowed from the industrially advanced countries. The philosophical approach to planning through modernisation has been guided by the mechanistic

assumption that replicating the technological developments of the West would necessarily lead to the attainment of improved standards of living for all sections of the people, especially in a mixed economy dominated by the Public Sector and other government agencies.

This 'modernisation' however, at the end of three decades of practice, has not only failed to bring improvements in the life of the common man, but has also accentuated inequalities at an alarming rate and created much bigger gaps in incomes, in accessibility to resources and in the use of knowledge systems. The result has been the creation of privileged enclaves of 'modernisation' kept alive artificially by a disproportionately heavy public funding amidst a background of an underprivileged traditional sector which is being increasingly deprived of its resources. In the socio-historical situation existing in India, these enclaves can exist only by continued underdevelopment of the vast rural areas.

Two remedies for this malady are usually proposed. The first, proposed by those who still (!) support the concept of 'modernisation' in its present political set up, suggests that the trickle down effect has not taken place not because it will never come about, but because there has not been enough modernisation. The second remedy, proposed by those who share this uncritical faith in modernisation but put the blame for its social consequences on the non-socialist political system of the country, argue for a basic change in the political set up which is expected to make the destructive technologies of today automatically change to fruitful technologies of tomorrow. It is also somehow concluded that accepting the inequality-accentuating nature of 'modern' technologies implies the existence of an egalitarian and just society before its introduction.[1]

The point that is missed is that in a non-deterministic understanding of technology, its choice and direction of growth are both a consequence of, as well as cause for social inequalities. Both the groups, however, strongly believe in the political neutrality of science and technology and a deterministic model of unilinear development. Thus both the groups see development

[1]G. Balachandran, 'Appropriate Technology : A Diversionary Concept,' *The Hindu* (January 24, 1981).

through modernisation of the present type as basically good and socially desirable and the only road to improved well-being of people, in spite of the stark reality of development made up of poverty and destitution all around.

While the faith of the *status quo* in 'modern' technologies is understandable since they get a disproportionately large benefit through its introduction, the uncritical faith in progress through modernisation of many radicals in India is rather puzzling. In our view, it can be explained by the acceptance by these radicals of a number of myths associated with technology. The first is that the technologies can be assessed independently of the socio-economic environment in which they get created and their fruitfulness can be divorced from their origin. The second myth is that not only does a technology exist independently of the society in which it gets created, it also exists independently of other technologies in that society.

However, a close look at the linkages between complexes of technologies and societal organisations reveals that technologies, especially of the modern sophisticated variety, have a politics intrinsic to them, in the sense that they engender particular demands from a particular socio-economic set up like the one where they first grew.[2] They tend to reproduce the characteristics of the background from which they emerge. With limits set by resources and incomes, such social reproduction through technology leads to formation of enclaves. The close linkage between technologies and social organisations is further strengthened by the fact that technologies grow in complexes rather than in isolation. An automobile as a technology in itself cannot function without the associated availability of technologies for metal, fuel, road, rubber etc. Nor can it function in a realistic way as an option for people whose incomes do not have any access to the capital intensity of these technologies.

[2]Langdon Winner, 'Do Artifacts Have Politics?' *Daedalus* (Winter 1980), pp. 121-135; W.D. Rasmussen, 'Advances in American Agriculture: The Mechanical Tomato Harvester as a Case Study,' *Technology and Culture*, 19 (n. 9, September, 1978), pp. 531-543; Frances Stewart, *Technology and Underdevelopment* (London: Macmillan, 1977); David Dickson, *Alternative Technology and the Politics of Technical Change* (Fontana, 1974); S. Goonatilake, *Colonial Culture: An Investigation into Imprisoned Minds* (forthcoming).

Besides resources in terms of raw materials and capital, there is another component which makes 'modern' technologies inaccessible to people who still operate in the traditional sector. That is the component of knowledge system and associated skills. 'Modern' technologies, while failing to make a positive impact on the large traditional sector, do influence it by undermining its resources, its markets and its knowledge systems. The result has been the creation of complete duality of socio-economic-cultural matrices, with the 'modern' and more powerful one with very few people associated with it, dominating over the natural, financial, educational and other resources of the country and the traditional one becoming more and more marginal together with the 80 per cent of the people associated with it.

WHO KNOWS WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES

Development in a dual society such as ours which depends mainly on a modernisation strategy based on following the industrially advanced countries, slowly robs the majority of the people of their resource-base for survival in the name of an overall well-being of the people. It must necessarily exclude the people's opinion on development from the planning process which is left completely in the hands of experts and bureaucrats whose vision of prosperity cannot perceive how, as Susan George puts it, the other half dies.[3] Nor do the experts and bureaucrats in one field recognise their links with other fields. This lack of coordination is a natural outcome of the misplaced belief in improving socio-economic conditions with the help of isolated technologies borrowed from a set up where they originated in a systematic and integrated fashion. The problem, in our view, is not merely that people have been left out of the process of planning for development. The problem really is that in a country with two societies, planning without people's participation, even of the most well-intentioned and competent sorts, will necessarily develop one at the cost of the other in an irreversible manner. It is this irreversibility of development that permanently destroys resource bases that need thousands of years to grow either in terms of knowledge systems or natural resources.

[3]Susan Goerge, *How the Other Half Dies—The Real Reasons for World Hunger* (London: Penguin Books, 1976).

Due to the irreversibility of the process and its capacity to rapidly destroy natural and social systems, the task of forming alternate development strategies becomes urgent. Our contention is that these alternatives cannot even be imagined, leave alone formulated in detail, without people's participation in the assessment of the present development plans and the generation of alternate ones. Technology assessment and development planning, which have so far exclusively been the domain of experts, can only be corrected if evaluation and planning are guided by participatory research.

Research as understood conventionally, is a full-time activity of academic professionals, and their expertise in the respective fields of specialisation have guranteed them their monopoly on research as an activity. The restriction has so far not merely been on who does research, but also on what research gets done or recognised. Research possibilities get limited by the way in which the powerful groups of society can register their priorities on the research system.[4] Because this mediation is very indirect and subtle in operating through the reward system, it becomes extremely easy to believe that research is an autonomous and socially neutral activity. Even if the impact of society and culture is recognised in social science research, it is rarely admitted as possible in research in natural science and technologies. The indirect mediation also implies that while the research system as a whole is guided by the priorities of the elite groups of society, individual researchers themselves are not committed to serving the interests of the elite. For them research is a freely and autonomously chosen activity which leads to autonomous results.

Added to the lack of awareness on the part of individual researchers of how their activity is unknowingly contributing to the growth of the knowledge system that serves the elite, is their lack of awareness of what research in which historical situation could go to the advantage of the weaker people. The myopia related to research possibilities is tied up very closely with extended training of the formal type and the requirements of specialisation. A good illustration is the recent reaction of the specialists of the Pune Milk Supply Scheme to the call to farmers

[4]For a good analysis of how research possibilities get restricted, see J. Vandermere, 'Agricultural Research and Social Conflict,' *Science for the People*, 13 (n. 1, January-February, 1981), p. 5.

by Sharad Joshi. The call has not been taken seriously by the urban experts since, according to them, 'Milk is a perishable commodity and farmers have no means of preserving the huge quantities of milk. The only option open to them was to destroy it.'[5] This negates the existence of all traditional milk product-preserving techniques.

Researchers thus end up reading only formal knowledge sources like publications and give up looking at society and nature. The research establishment, as it exists in India, has no room or mechanism for making good this gap from within. We have, after all, had no dearth of claims of all research being aimed at the needs of the people and removal of poverty, starting from economics and agriculture right up to sophisticated space technology.

The problem is only in part, directly political. To a large extent it is also indirectly political through the built-in epistemological constraints on the modern research system. On the one hand it creates compartmentalised, discoordinated and fragmented expert knowledge and, on the other, it renders invisible the knowledge of the people involved in the real life activity at which research is aimed. However, there are two very good reasons for taking people's knowledge as an important element in research which tries to provide a more holistic understanding of the natural and social world. Firstly, assuming that the people are ignorant, it is they who know better than the experts, exactly where the shoe pinches. Secondly, it turns out that people are really not as ignorant as the experts take them to be, at least in matters related directly to their activities. Particularly for agrarian societies like India where the majority of the people are involved in primary production, their informal knowledge accumulated over centuries of practical experience has its own built-in reliability and viability.[6] This ignorance becomes specially important in the context of most 'modernisation' efforts being ecologically reckless and most experts being ecologically insensitive. For any sustainable development, the stability of the eco-system and its continued ability to provide the resources for

[5] *Economic Times*, Bombay, May 13, 1981.

[6] "Rural Development: Whose Knowledge Counts?' *Bulletin of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex* 10(n. 2 January, 1979) (Special Number).

development is of utmost importance in societies like India. The whole life-style of the rural people in India is closely interlinked with the local eco-system and danger to it is obviously first sensed by these communities, with an associated threat to the material base of their existence. The more privileged and urban sections of the population are removed from the resource-base which satisfies their needs even through indirect technological chains.

Since most professional planners and bureaucrats fall into this category, their strategies for development are at best ignorant of the role of a stable ecology for the satisfaction of the needs of the rural population and at worst they consciously contribute to the process of channelisation of resources from the rural poor to the urban rich. In either case, their development plans, based on technological determinism, consciously support and encourage the development and use of technologies that tend to destroy the local ecology, and hence the sustenance of the material base for survival. Consequently, the traditional technologies on which the life-style of threatened communities is based, instead of being improved, get overtaken by ecologically unstable and socially irresponsible modern technologies. Lewis Mumford was probably addressing himself to these distinctive technologies when he wrote:

> From late neolithic times in the Near East, right down to our own day, two technologies have recurrently existed side by side: one authoritarian, the other democratic; the first system-centered, immensely powerful, but inherently unstable, the other man-centered, relatively weak, but resourceful and durable.[7]

The weaker but ecologically stable technologies are, however, systematically threatened by the more powerful, ecologically reckless technologies which are projected as being more efficient and productive in some absolute sense. In the process, the traditional technologies are identified as unproductive and are marginalised in the development plans. Associated with this marginalisation, the knowledge and skills of local communities are also rendered invisible. Professionals are the only ones

[7]Lewis Mumford, 'Authoritarian and Democratic Technics,' *Technology and Culture*, 25 (n.1, January 1964), pp. 1-8.

viewed as having reliable knowledge. Their role in policy-making, therefore, gets more and more entrenched till an ecological crisis threatens the livelihood of vast rural populations which sets off organised opposition to development and technology policy. This opposition also takes a few steps in exposing the political base of technologies and the restricted nature of the knowledge of the experts who work on the development of these technologies.

The case of the exploitation of the forestry resources in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar may be taken as an illustration of the conflict of interests and knowledge systems of professionally accepted experts and the traditional communities whose lives are very closely linked with forest produce. The professionals are scientists in Forest Research Institutes and bureaucrats who manage those forest areas which are demarcated as reserved. This demarcation originated in the colonial age when the British rulers took to reserved forestry in India as a commercial need. The local cultural practices were ignored. As a result, the silvicultural practices of the foresters have been largely restricted to developing those species which are commercially valuable.[8] Encouragement to such species is interpreted as scientific forestry. Species which are not commercially valuable but nevertheless are materially valuable for local populations by being the major resource for their fuel, for construction of houses, for fodder and for soil and water conservation are ignored and depleted. Forestry experts neither know much about these species themselves (since the training of foresters does not expose them fully to the socio-cultural role of forests), nor do they recognise the knowledge of local populations about these species.

Thus, there have been recent attempts by the forest department in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar to plant commercially valuable teak and pine by destroying the traditional Sal forests, which in the forester's view, are unproductive. The local tribal population has, however, been forced to start a movement against this policy of the forest department, since Sal trees have played a central role in their economy and culture. They use the seeds for oil, the leaves for fodder, the flowers

[8] "Save Forest Conference—Demand for Moratorium on Cutting Forests," *How*, 4 (n. 1, January, 1981), pp. 21-22.

as food and drink and the bark for medicinal purposes. (Diabetic patients are cured by drinking water kept in a pot made of Sal wood).[9] Sal is thus an integral part of their social, religious, cultural and economic life.

Consequently, teak and pine have become the embodiment of a political and technological structure which takes resources away from the local populations while Sal is the embodiment of a structure which allows the survival of the local population with local resources and local control. Trees and forests have been an integral part of rural living in India and they continue to be so. Ninety per cent of the poor population of the country still uses firewood as fuel, and no alternative is affordable or available to them yet. Most of the rural housing is still based on locally available forest produce. Finally, but most importantly, village communities do not see trees in terms of the dead product timber, but as dynamic living systems which conserve water and soil, and provide soil nutrients. In other words, it is the ecological role of forests which is of significance to the rural people and this role has been decreasing as the forest resources get depleted through commerical exploitation whose benefits reach the elite and marginalise those whose life, culture, economy and religion centre round these resources.

THE RIGHT TO COUNTER-EXPERTISE

Participatory research, in our view, is a very meaningful activity in the context of such critical assessment by the people, of official development activity. It does not, however, open the possibilities of changing the fragmented character of the established research community. Given the nature of modern research, even a well-meaning researcher cannot identify in advance, the impact of any development project on the local people and eco-system. He can at best sense the impact through participatory research and strengthen the technicalities of assessment already made by the people themselves. His analytic powers can only follow the direction laid by the insights of the popular movement. The strengthening of the insights is not required in an absolute sense. It is only required in the context

[9]Sevanti Ninan, 'Motivating Social Forestry,' *Voluntary Action*, 22 (n. 1 January, 1980), p. 11.

of a countervailing knowledge system which derives its power indirectly through political support but more directly through its sophistication in technicalities.

Participatory research thus becomes a two-pronged tool for critical evaluation. On the one hand it strengthens the needs and wants of the common people by putting their feelings and views in a form which is easily understandable and hence respected by the experts and policy makers. On the other hand it exposes the restricted nature of expert knowledge and provides a platform for countering the political power at a level of expertise where no serious challenge to it has emerged in India so far.

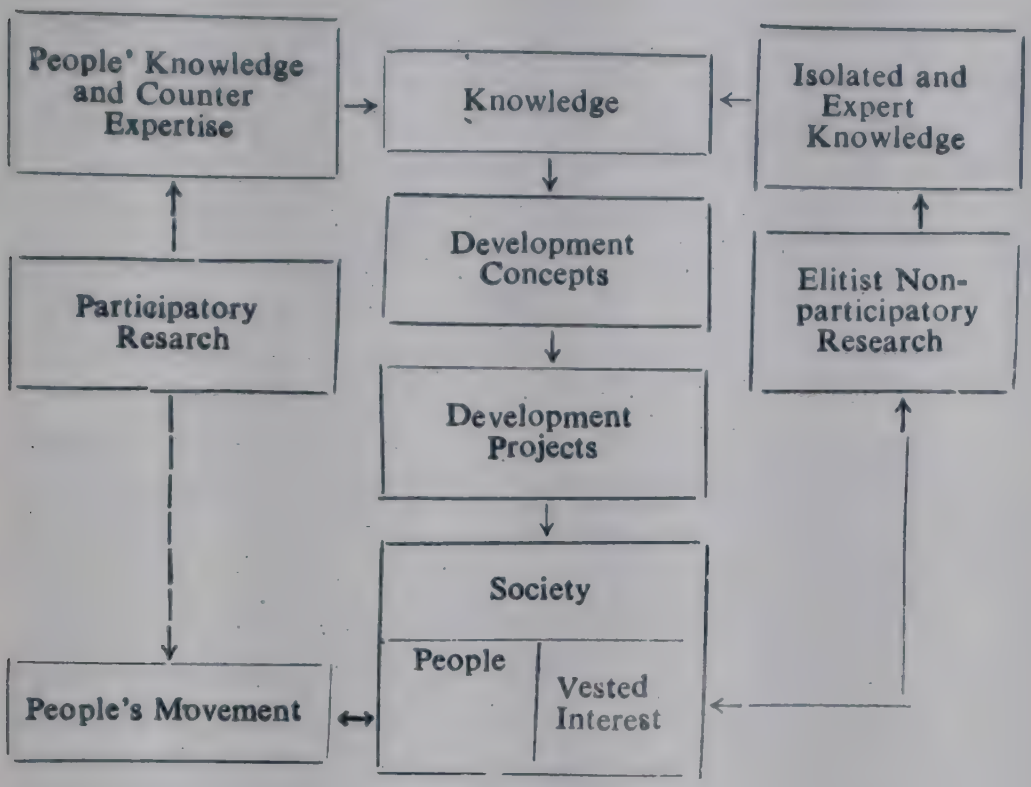
The role of participatory research in technology assessment in supporting people's struggles cannot be underestimated. Firstly, it can help the people's movement grow at the down-to-earth level and establish more democratic decision-making in resource utilisation around which most serious class conflicts are taking place in India today. Secondly, it can add strength to these struggles by taking their arguments to a level of theoretical sophistication that can demand serious attention and cannot be dubbed as political propaganda or anti-development moves. Critical evaluation of 'development' is not meant to be a block to progress. In fact it provides the only route to a meangingful progress for the people. After all, as Salomon has pointed out,[10] people have a right to 'counter-expertise'. Participatory research is the vehicle to establish that right.

The issue about whether or not people can participate in technology assessment and development planning is no longer an academic debate. Popular movements throughout the country are ensuring that people's participation in the formulation of the official policies can no longer be ignored. It is time for the concerned researchers to identify a place for participatory research in the whole chain of events. As seen by us, this is described in the scheme given in the figure below.

A lead has already been given by some members of the Indian academic community and we would like to note a few of the exercises in participatory research in India. Though people in India raised a voice 300 years ago, against reckless deforestation

[10]J.J. Salomon, 'Science Policy Studies,' in, Ina Spiegel Rosing and Derek de Solla Price (eds.), *Science, Technology and Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 66.

Figure: *Scheme for identification of the place of participatory research in the system of development planning*



or against the loss of land by submersion for hydro-electric projects earlier this century, these struggles were quickly crushed and their impact forgotten. Senapati Bapat, for example, led a movement against submersion of land and forest by a Tata hydro-project near Bombay, earlier this century.[11] However, the impact of the Chipko movement in the Himalayan forests, on the bureaucracy, has been much greater, since, together with the people of the Himalayan villages, Indian scientists as well as internationally known researchers like Richard Barbe Baker have argued for the movement.[12]

Another example of constructive collaboration with the local people is the Bedthi hydro-electric project in North Kanara, Karnataka. The now well-known debate on the need and repercussions of the project was taken seriously by the Karnataka

[11] 'Chipko How Old?' *Himalaya: Man and Nature*, 2 (n. 5, October, 1978), p. 34.

[12] V. Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay, 'Socio-ecological Impact of Development Projects in Tehri-Garhwal,' *Himalaya: Man and Nature*, 3 (n. 11, April, 1980), p. 1.

Government only when eminent researchers, together with the local people, did the assessment and cost-benefit analysis of the project.

It is one of a series of hydel projects in the Malnad area of North Kanara district. Due to its evergreen and deciduous forests, the area is also rich in water resources and offers a good possibility of generating a large amount of hydro-electricity. However, the people of Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur Talukas who will be directly or indirectly affected by submersion, have been resisting this project because their interests and livelihood are being sacrificed for the satisfaction of the interests of the urban-industrial complexes of the state, as the entire power generated will be fed into the Karnataka grid at Hubli.

The people of Sirsi had been having local protests to register their needs and interests, but the work on the project continued unhindered, until some researchers from the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Statistical Institute went to the region and met the local activists. A collaboration for participatory research was thus set up. While the macro-level researchers helped plan a household survey to assess the impact on local resources—natural, social and cultural—the local inhabitants carried out the actual data collection. As a result of this joint effort, it was possible to show that the loss due to submersion of plantations, agricultural and forest land would be much more than what had been calculated by the Mysore Power Corporation to justify the scheme. The study was able to show that even using the purely economic guidelines set up by the planning commission, the proportion of gain to the loss suffered by the people was negative. It is of course possible to change the criteria to a social cost-benefit analysis which would be concerned more centrally with people, in which case the costs become even higher.

Among other things, this exercise made the macro-researchers aware of the tremendous amount of knowledge-resources existing with the people who are considered ignorant. The population is involved mostly in arecanut, cardamom and pepper cultivation crops that are planted in a multi-tiered fashion. We later discovered that what these people have been doing over centuries is now being proposed as energy-farming by bodies like the UN. It is ironical that to generate energy through hydro-electric

power, another extremely sensitive, renewable energy resource is being destroyed. A simple calculation done by a scientist at the Indian Institute of Science after a visit to the area was able to show that the forests of the region, if managed well, could generate more energy in a sustained manner than the planned hydro-electric project which involves an irreversible destruction of the valuable resources of the region. This is especially relevant in the context of the real energy crisis in India being shortage of firewood which continues to meet the energy needs of 90 per cent of our rural households. This crisis is aggravated each time a rich firewood base is submerged for the purpose of generating electric power.

These intuitive arguments of the people of the Bedthi area got legitimacy only when they were reformulated in a language that is understood, and hence respected, by the decision-makers. As a result of the reports and meetings that were the outcome of this experiment in participatory research, the work on the project has been stalled and a commission has been appointed to study its feasibility. In the meantime, the participation of the people of Malnad and researchers in Bangalore continues to generate development plans which would be more responsible socially and ecologically.[13]

Other examples can be given from other parts of India. Some activists in Goa, for example, have recently joined with a group of experts to critically evaluate a 15-year perspective plan for the development of Goa, prepared by an elite institution—The Administrative Staff College of India—and accepted by the Government.[14] The environmental plan document for the Shahdol District of Madhya Pradesh as prepared by a group of scientists of a voluntary organisation with the participation of the local people challenges many myths of development and opens up prospects for alternate development strategies.[15]

13. For details, see the papers presented at the *National Seminar on, Impact of Hydro-Projects in Uttara Kanada* (Sirsi: January 16-19, 1981) especially the paper by V. Paranjape, M. Gadgil and L.T. Sharma.

14. *Meeting of Development Activists and Intellectuals* (Panaji: May 16-17, 1981).

15. A.K. Roy, *et al. Environmental Planning: Report submitted to the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi* (Shahdol: 1981).

CONCLUSION

These cases are just the beginning of a process that cannot be stopped because the present development strategies will increasingly accentuate the crises from which the exercises have emerged. The present development startegies are aimed merely at achieving economic growth, irrespective of whether such growth can be sustained while eroding the natural social resources on which it depends. Development plans which marginalise people and natural resources, will sooner or later run into a dead end. It has already happened in the fisheries sector, where, within a decade, reckless mechanisation has depleted marine resources to such an extent that in many fishing villages, both traditional catamaran and modern purseiners and trawlers sit idle.[16]

The powerful groups whose profits and privileges show up as economic growth, are unaffected by the destruction of resources or people because, if bamboo resources are destroyed, they can move from paper to fisheries, and when marine resources are destroyed, they can move into electronics. The options close only for those whose lives have been inextricably tied up with local resources, and whose knowledge-systems have enabled them to use these resources in sound, suitable and responsible ways. Alternative Development strategies are an issue both of liberation and survival for this group of underprivileged and exploited people.

Participatory research used as a tool for technology assessment can contribute to their struggle for liberation and survival in two ways. Firstly, through participation, it can prevent their knowledge and resources from being marginalised and destroyed by giving them legitimacy in the context of the dominant knowledge systems. This constructive aspect is unavoidable if the survival of millions of people in rural India is to be guaranteed. They need support also from the second aspect of participatory research which may be much more critical than the first It consists in making lay people aware of the content and role of the dominant knowledge modes so that they are strengthened in their struggles for material survival by the ablility to counter these modes.

16. Ossie Fernandes, 'Fishermen's Struggle for Survival,' *How*, 3(n. 6-7, June 1980), pp. 20-23.

People's movements in India are getting generated increasingly around issues related to control over resources, because this is where social and material contradictions of our contemporary system are most acutely emerging. Knowledge about resources is an important constituent of the manner in which they are controlled. In this sense, elite knowledge must be recognised as a source of power and exploitation—and countering this knowledge by knowledge generated through participatory research becomes a very essential and potent aspect of people's struggles. If this process is to materialise, the macro-researchers have to identify themselves with the people and play the double role of subsuming people's knowledge into professional terminology and re-translating macro-knowledge into popular language.

Case Studies

7

The Pachod Health Programme

A. Dyal Chand and M. I. Soni

Participatory Evaluation can be defined as a process of self-realisation where an organisation working with the community studies the strength and weakness of its programme through the participation of the community and all levels of workers. In this process, evaluation of a project is not an isolated terminal event. The process of evaluation or self-realisation has to be built into the routine of a programme so that implementation and evaluation of the programme are concurrent.

Similarly, participation of the community and various levels of workers cannot be expected in a terminal isolated process of evaluation unless participation is woven into the fabric of the programme in such a manner that the community and the workers participate in decision-making, assessment and steering from the very beginning.[1]

This paper is a case study based on the experience of the Comprehensive Health and Development Project which is being implemented in Pachod, Paithan Taluka of Aurangabad District, Maharashtra.

1. Rajesh Tandon, 'Participatory Research: An Explanatory Statement,' in Rajesh Tandon (ed.), *Patticipatory Research in Asia* (Canberra: Centre for Continuing Education—Australian National University, 1980), pp. 13-14.

PROJECT AREA

The Project area is rural. It forms the southern part of the Paithan Development Block and covers all the villages under the Pachod Primary Health Centre (PHC). The rainfall is very deficient—less than 40 cms annually. Over 50 per cent of the land is barren. Irrigation facilities are available on only 20 per cent of the land, mostly belonging to a handful of rich farmers. The main cereal crop is 'Jowar.' Services of the State Road Transport buses are available to only 20 per cent of these villages; the remaining 80 per cent of the villages are far off the road and have approaches only through mud roads which are inaccessible during the monsoons.

In December 1978, a 10 per cent random sample survey of the households in all the villages under the Project was carried out. In June 1979 a 100 per cent head count operation was accomplished. We found out that this 575 sq. km area of 77 villages had a population of 67,500 in 12,400 households i.e. an average of 5.5 per household or 128 per sq. km. The sex ratio was similar to the national picture i.e. 947 females per 1000 males. 12 per cent of the population was under five years of age and 40.9 per cent under 15 years. Crude birth rate was 30 per 1000 and crude death rate was 12.5. Infant mortality was 130 but it was higher among females than among males. Also the literacy rate reflected inequality among sexes and castes. While the overall rate was 30.83 per cent, it was 45.22 per cent among males and only 16.30 per cent among females.

Also inequality between castes was reflected in the health sphere, literacy and land-ownership pattern. About 30 per cent of the population owned no land and most of them belonged to the backward castes while the 6 per cent who owned ten hectares and more as well as the 17 per cent who owned between four and ten hectares were predominantly Marathas.

The morbidity section of the Baseline Survey (1978) revealed that the prevalent rates of night-blindness, diarrhoea, and tuberculosis were very high. A large proportion of the population, particularly children and women, was suffering from chronic malnutrition. The traditional practices of delivering women in the villages were unhygienic and often highly injurious to the health of the mother and child. Knowledge regarding the risks

involved during the ante-natal, intra-natal and post-natal period was conspicuously absent.

Owing to the lack of safe drinking water, the prevalence of intestinal parasities (Helminths) was high. Due to low level of sanitation, transmission of communicable diseases was also very easy. The immunisation status of the children was very poor. Most of the people were not even aware of the need of immunisation for various diseases.

Already in 1975, we had submitted a project proposal to the Government of Maharashtra and to international funding agencies to start a programme for providing primary health care to the population of these villages of Paithan Taluka. The original proposal suggested training of a community health worker and the involvement of Government Primary School teachers as part-time social workers in a project designed to develop a methodology for providing comprehensive health care. It was a target-oriented project that aimed at solving the health problems of the area. Its stated objectives were:

1. Reduction in the crude birth rate from 36 to 25.
2. 50 per cent reduction in the infant mortality rate.
3. 50 per cent reduction in the mortality rate of under-fives.
4. 50 per cent reduction in the under-fives' malnutrition.
5. Treatment of 80 per cent of the existing blindness among patients with curable eye diseases and 80 per cent control of xerophthalmia.
6. Effective ante, intra and post-natal care and immunisation against tetanus to 80 per cent pregnant women.
7. Bringing under control 80 per cent of tuberculosis cases.
8. Bringing under treatment 80 per cent of leprosy cases.
9. Training of the *dais* in all the project villages and training of multi-purpose workers for all the sub-centres.
10. Dissemination of health education through regular mass health education programmes in all the villages.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Though in the beginning we viewed ourselves only as medical personnel and our survey was aimed at making our medical project more effective, from the beginning we had decided that the people should be involved at every stage of the project. The

community was involved in decision-making, in determining the felt needs and priorities and in finalising the operational objectives of the heath programme. This would set a new process in motion and lead to women's organisation.

Participation in Determining Priorities

There was no involvement of the people in the original rough proposal for submission to the Government of Maharashtra for scrutiny. Immediately after that we conducted a 10 per cent sample survey in 22 villages with a population of over 20,000 to determine the priorities of the community. To our dismay we discovered that health merited on an average the eleventh rank in their list of priorities.

This was to be a turning point in our growth as well as that of the people. All that we could do was to accept our limitations and explain to the community that since the background of our organisation was medical, we would be able to get involved only in the field of health service. The interviewers tried next to find out the highest priority of the community in the field of health. In 21 villages out of 22, the response of the community was that their greatest need was in the field of midwifery because that was the only time when immediate medical help was required.

The project proposal was redesigned and we decided to start implementation of the project by providing maternal care and midwifery services. It was decided to select a woman as a community health worker and train her in midwifery. However, discussions with the community revealed that a *dai* (traditional birth attendant) existed in most villages. Her services were sought only if the mother or mother-in-law or other relatives failed in their concerted effort, by which time it was really too late for the *dai* to do anything. To justify her involvement, however, she would make an endeavour, resulting in further loss of precious time, as she was technically not capable of detecting complications early in labour. Invariably the *dai* ended up by referring her client to a hospital, where the natural outcome of the delay and tampering was either maternal or neo-natal mortality.

Prior to the implementation of the programme only 6 per cent of the deliveries were being conducted by the *dais*, 8 per cent

by medical personnel and the remaining 86 per cent by mothers or mothers-in-law. Despite this marginal dependence on *dais*, her services were traditionally sought for by the community during distress, and we realised that even after training a community health worker in midwifery, there would still be a traditional dependence of the community on the *dai*, however marginal.

The project proposal was re-designed a second time. We dropped the idea of training village primary school teachers and instead decided to start the project by training village *dais*. When the community was promised midwifery services in their own villages by the project, they had envisaged a mini-hospital with a resident nurse in their village. The idea of training their own village *dai* (invariably an illiterate low-caste farm labourer), fell far short of their expectations. The impracticability of deputing trained resident nurses because of the cost factor involved was discussed with the community. There was great resistance from the community, but eventually the villagers decided to give our programme a try. However, the *dais* resented the very idea of retraining. They had inherited this profession from their mothers or mothers-in-law and some of them had practised it for twenty or thirty years and saw no need of any new training. After long discussion, we succeeded in convincing seven of them to come for a course. After that the *dais* have become the most enthusiastic participants in the programme.

Even at this stage we were thinking only in terms of a medical programme. But, by deciding to involve the people at every stage and by constantly re-designing our programme to suit their needs, we had set a new process in motion—that of constant interaction between the core group and the people. We had learnt to trust the people to take their own decisions in an area in which we considered ourselves professionals. This would help us and the people to grow together

Participation in Training of Workers

Exposing an individual to any knowledge for the first time takes a long time but meets with little resistance. Re-educating an individual with existing traditional beliefs is more difficult since it involves changing values, beliefs and practices. This was the situation we were confronted with the *dais* who had been delivering women traditionally over the last 25 to 30 years. Telling

them that their practices were harmful and resulted in death would have created severe psychological barriers and resistance to the acceptance of new practices and knowledge. A new method had to be found.

Our first task was to identify existing practices. In order to do this, we had to learn to communicate with them in a manner acceptable to them. After a long dialogue, we formulated a questionnaire of 160 questions and interviewed each one individually. Through this we learnt their traditional practices, attitudes and knowledge. The training programme was then re-designed to change harmful practices, encourage beneficial traditional customs, change attitudes and values when required and add new knowledge.

The most delicate manoeuvring was involved in changing their traditional harmful practices. The training programme was designed in such a way that the participants were exposed to problems and hazards involved in midwifery and were made to participate by suggesting alternative solutions. No solution was suggested to them by the doctors but ways found, of replacing harmful practices of some of them with the healthy ones of others. As an illustration we may mention the practice of giving a new-born two spoonsful of castor oil in the belief that a catharsis was necessary to remove the fluids of the womb ingested by the new-born during birth. Instead of contradicting their practice which was certainly responsible for neo-natal deaths due to diarrhoea, a problem-solution approach with active participation of the trainees was adopted. We gave our own experience to illustrate that two spoonsful were too strong even for adults and suggested that even though a baby needs a laxative, castor oil is much too strong for a new-born. The *dais* suggested traditional herbal laxatives. One suggested honey as a mild laxative. Inquiries were made if honey was readily available in all villages. Through consensus it was decided to adopt a spoon of honey as laxative for new-borns henceforth, a practice accepted in the project area now.

Participation continued also in identifying tools of communication. We were faced with posters on health care, diseases, development and other matters, that were conceived by urban institutions and hospitals. At first we tried to find out whether these posters conveyed any message to the rural folk whom they

are supposed to educate. We realised that they rarely did. Take for example the picture of a baby with some TB bacteria in its stomach. Only two out of one hundred women to whom we showed the picture identified it as that of a baby and none understood the meaning of the red dots that were supposed to indicate TB bacteria.

This is when we realised, as many studies have shown, that there is a social and cultural gap between the urban educated doctor and the rural folk. This gap can be bridged only by the doctor getting into the local culture and by trusting the villagers to solve their own problems and himself becoming only a supportive element.[2]

The *dais* themselves began the search for an answer. At first we experimented with methods such as puppet shows but realised that this did not form part of their culture. Like others who used tape recorders and other mechanical instruments that were new to the people,[3] also in the case of the puppet show, the viewers were busy admiring the tool (the puppets) and ignored the message.

Finally, the *dais* suggested various pictures and photographs. Based on these suggestions, we took four or five photographs for each message and the villagers themselves drew a few pictures. These were then shown to the villagers and modified according to their suggestions. Only those that conveyed the message at first sight to all the viewers were selected and printed.

Participation in Implementation

By this time we had come to realise that we could not run the programme by ourselves. The people had to take it over and make it their own. As a first step to this, we suggested the formation of Village Health Committees. This proposal was accepted and the villagers formed committees consisting of one person from each lane or caste.

[2] C.M.E. Mathews and V. Benjamin, *Changing Health Beliefs and Practices in Rural Tamil Nadu* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1981), pp. 21-23.

[3] S. Kaithathara and Mariam D.C., 'Community Health to Build up People's Leadership: The Berhampur Experience,' in Walter Fernandes (ed.), *People's Participation in Development: Approaches to Non-Formal Education* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1980), p. 134.

Though we would have liked the committee to represent both men and women, in practice we could not get over the local male-dominated culture. Consequently, only men were elected to these committees. However, from hindsight we realise that this was a blessing in disguise. It is because our programme as well as the task assigned to the committees are such that 80 per cent of it was bound to be limited to women and children. The committee is the only forum in which men get involved in the programme by playing a supportive role to their womenfolk. But for this, they would have been completely left out and this could have led to reaction from them. It is possible that as a result of tension resulting from this reaction, women would not have been able to get organised the way they have done now.

The main role assigned to the committees was to spread the message of health. It was hoped that the committee would form a mutually supportive group, each of whose members would make other members of the community aware of the objectives of the project, help in overcoming problems, meet families that were resistant and share with them the benefits of others. However, given that 80 per cent of the participants were women and children, these functions could not be fulfilled by a male-dominated committee.

As a supportive group, the committees helped in arranging the 'health post' in their village for ante-natal clinics, immunisation of children and for the two-month health education effort that preceded the mass immunisation programme. Their most important function has been in their role as official representatives of the village in dealing with the Government. Though a cabinet-level decision had been taken to declare ours the official training centre, the local vested interests and officials combined to oppose this decision. A local politician even threatened to organise a strike of all the health workers in the district against a voluntary organisation getting official recognition to train government PHC health workers. That was the moment for the village level committees to swing into action. Several village health committees sent memoranda to the Government that they had received good services from our organisation and that the project should be given official recognition.

A compromise was arrived at. We were once again given an official status, but all financial support was withdrawn. Because

of this and other incidents, we have come to realise that recognition by the Government should not be one of the criteria of successful implementation of a health project. In spite of policy declaration about the need of cooperation, we realised that ultimately it is the local vested interests that block all change that is directed towards those who do not get the benefits of the present unjust system.[4] If an alternative has to be found, it has to start not from a policy declaration but from the grassroots level—those who are deprived of their rights by those who have monopolised the resources and services.

This is what happened in our project area. While the male-dominated committees provided the supportive facilities, the *dais* and other women spread the message. We realised that when people are really involved in a programme, the extension strategy that forms part of many projects becomes irrelevant. A rural society has got its own methods of communication.

> There is no secret in the village and there can be no secret. Rumours spread fast and a family planning method, if used successfully by a woman will be a change agent in the fertility behaviour of other women in the villages, irrespective of caste and creed. A method which is a failure or has side effects will affect the whole community in the village.[5]

This is what happened in the villages. What is said here about family planning methods is equally true about other aspects. News spread through word of mouth and whenever there was a problem the rural women whom many consider ignorant, found their own way of solving it.

As an example we may mention the problem a *dai* faces in identifying accurately the last menstrual period of new antenatal women. Since most of her customers are illiterate, they are occasionally 15 days to one month off the mark. This causes severe problems for the *dai* in calculating the expected date of confinement of the woman. Some of the *dais* and their peer group of regular customers have evolved their own unique

[4] ***Health for All: An Alternate Strategy***, Report of a study group set up jointly by ICSSR and ICMR, (Pune: Indian Institute of Education, 1981), pp. X-XI.

[5] Kathleen Dorairaj, ***Fertility Control in India: Natural Family Planning as an Alternate Strategy*** (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1981), p.26.

method of calculating a new ante-natal's last menstrual period by comparing it with that of their own. Their peer group indulges in the same process. Through participation, they have evolved a solution to a problem with which we grappled unsuccessfully for almost two years.

Participation in Health Education and Community Awareness

It is not enough to involve a few leaders. If there has to be social change, the project has to belong to the whole community. One of the tools of keeping the majority out of the decision-making process is professionalisation and monopoly of knowledge by a few. As a result of this unjust system, the majority has been deprived of their right to health since medical knowledge has been kept away from them.

It was decided from the beginning that those who got the benefit of our programme should fully share in the knowledge of what they were getting. In the process of examining pregnant women at the ante-natal clinic, the *dai* asks the pregnant woman associated questions. Why did you come for this examination? Why am I examining your eyes? What is the cause of your anaemia? How can it be overcome? Why am I examining your abdomen? What do I find out? How can that help you?'

The *dai* completes her examination and the pregnant woman moves on to the nurse for investigation and immunisation. The nurse asks her, 'why did you take this injection? How many more must you take? Why am I taking your blood pressure? What can happen if it is raised above normal?' etc., etc. In other words, all the women participate in their own health education. No knowledge is kept away from them and no medicine is prescribed unless they know why it is given. After 4 years, there are some ante-natals who are coming for their second, and in some instances third pregnancy. They are the *dai's* peer group. They enjoy their association with their peer group and take delight in initiating a newcomer who cannot answer the *dai's* oft-repeated questions. It has become a kind of game which this peer group enjoys every 15 days when they meet at the village health post, the multi-paras with experience behind them initiating the newcomer to the new practices of the *dai*. The same process of awareness through group participation is being used for other service components of the programme. Every year,

knowledge, attitudes, practice interviews with similar questions are taken to find out the cumulative change in health awareness.

Participation in Change of Direction and Emphasis

It was decided from the beginning to use the internal resources to the maximum. The community was to overcome malnutrition only through nutrition education and avoid use of nutritional supplements, however slow the process may be.

The community health worker gives nutrition education independently during her house to house visits, monitors growth of children in coordination with the male multi-purpose worker and every fortnight visits homes of only severely malnourished children with the visiting nurse, to give nutritional demonstration to parents of these children.

Because of the magnitude of the programme (there are over 5000 children whose growth is being monitored on a monthly basis), our initial emphasis was only on children with third degree malnutrition. After three years, the percentage of children with severe malnutrition is now one-fifth of what it was.

During this period, the nurses and the community health workers realised that, whereas children with third degree malnutrition were fewer, several children soon after one year were either losing weight or not gaining any weight at all. The community health workers realised that the main reason for this loss was that children were not being weaned onto solids till the age of two or more. As a result, the child lost weight when it was suddenly weaned, till it got used to other food. Hence the CHWs suggested that emphasis be placed on parents of newborns or on four month old children, so that from that time onwards they could be instructed on the future nutrition of the child. The suggested change in their role from treating malnutrition to preventing it came through their own realisation and through group participation.

Another example of people's involvement is the development of appropriate technology for preparing safe delivery kits for the *dais*. After studying their socio-economic background, we realised that providing them with sophisticated kit of clamps and cord-cutting scissors was not the answer, as they neither had large enough utensils to contain these instruments, nor enough fuel to boil and sterilise them. In fact, the comprehension of the extent of

boiling and time required in minutes was extremely variable. We decided to provide blades for cutting and string for tying the cord, gauze, cotton and iodine, all autoclaved and sealed in polythene bags.

Before the project started, in almost 98 per cent of the deliveries conducted by relatives at home, the baby's cord was cut with implements such as sickles, kitchen knives, pieces of glass, sharp stones etc. Today 56 per cent of the deliveries are conducted by the *dais* who use autoclaved safe delivery kits provided to them. Of the remaining 44 per cent deliveries conducted by mothers or mothers-in-law, over 95 per cent have used new blades purchased from the village grocer but only about 20 per cent boiled the blade before using it.

When we chided the *dais* that their health education was deficient and that we expected all the mothers and in-laws who conducted deliveries in their own homes to use boiled blades, the *dais* observed that what the village women saw them doing was breaking the seal of the polythene bags, removing the blade and using it. 'They never see us boiling it.' They suggested that we give them the raw material and that they would boil and sterlise it before using it. Now some of our *dais* carry blades, string and pouches of gauze and cotton in their purses and boil these in the home of their client before the delivery. The other women have started following them. Many more cases can be given but they would show the same process of the *dais* and CHWs evaluating the reaction of the community and suggesting remedies in consonance with the local situation.

These are but a few examples of how the community and all cadres of staff have participated from the beginning in planning and programming, in their own training, in determining and changing operational objectives, in conscientisation and self-realisation, and in changing the direction and emphasis of the health programme. The result of this process has not only been a change in the medical programme and health situation, but a slow transformation of their attitudes and society.

CONCURRENT EVALUATION

A major factor in the transformation was the fact that evaluation has been an on-going concurrent process in this project. The

nurses assess their own and the performance of the *dais* under their control. They discuss their problems and suggest solutions. Since they meet the project staff every day, problem solving, self-assessment and the evaluation of performance of others is a routine affair.

The project staff meet the *dais*, community health workers, nurses and multi-purpose workers as separate groups every week and as a single group every fortnight. They assess their own and each other's performance. The monthly reporting and monitoring is designed like monthly statements which, when cummulated, provide a quarterly, six-monthly and annual work audit.

As mentioned earlier, the very process of health education is by constant questioning. There is, therefore, a built-in mechanism for assessing the programme, its workers and the health awareness created by the project. The community evaluates the knowledge of their village *dai* and community health workers, and the middle-tier staff assess whether the health awareness in the community is improving or not. For a scientific computation these three Knowledge, Attitude, Practice surveys are conducted annually:

1. Change in knowledge and attitude of the workers.
2. Change in practices of the workers.
3. Change in health awareness of the community.

When an official evaluation was conducted,[6] it came as the terminal point of this process and a reflection on steps for the future. The evaluation showed that there were many tangible achievements. But we also realised that the real benefit was not merely in the improvement of the health situation but in social change. The *dais* had become the leaders of their community and had brought about a slow but definite change especially among the Scheduled Caste women.

Tangible Achievements

Over 70 per cent of the pregnant women in the area are now

[6]This evaluation was conducted by Dr. V. Benjamin of CMC, Vellore and Mrs. Maitreyee Mukyopadhyay of Calcutta. Most of what follows in this paper is taken, almost verbatim, from Part II of the report prepared by Mrs Mukyopadhyay. We are grateful to her for allowing us to use this paper.

covered by ante-natal programmes while their number was negligible before the project started. 58 per cent of the deliveries are now conducted by trained *dais* in safe and hygienic conditions. The outcome of this is that there has not been a single case of maternal or neo-natal deaths due to tetanus during 1980 among the *dais*' clientele and puerperal sepsis, the major cause of maternal and neo-natal mortality, is under control. Neo-natal mortality has registered a sharp fall from 130/1000 to 80/1000 live-births and neo-natal maternal deaths from 10.5 to 3.4 per thousand.

A similar trend is discernible in the area of child health. 54 per cent of all children under five years of age have been covered by the Triple Antigen immunisation and 40 per cent by BCG. Although because of socio-economic reasons the number of malnourished children remains static, constant supervision and care provided by the community health workers has reduced third degree malnutrition from 20 per cent to 5.1 per cent. As mentioned above, we have already taken measures to reduce first and second degree malnutrition. The state of hygiene, both personal and of the village as a whole, and sterilisation of implements at delivery, have improved considerably.

As an example of hygienic habits we may mention the practice of the *dais*. Before their training, the *dais* were asked if they washed their hands before conducting a delivery. Culturally, an Indian woman is considered unclean and therefore unfit to enter the kitchen or the sanctum in the house for a period of 5 to 10 days during menstruation and after delivery. The *dais* were emphatic that, delivery being an unclean process, they did not see any sense in washing their hands before conducting a delivery, but would certainly have a bath after it was over, in order to purify themselves from the state of ritual pollution.

The project staff with their conflicting value systems could have been tempted to impose their more 'sophisticated' values. But this would have been counter-productive. Instead, the *dai* was exposed to the knowledge of germs, the cause and effects of disease mechanism etc. She gradually disseminated the knowledge to her peer group. The result of this new awareness is apparent in the personal hygiene of the *dai* and her home and of her peer group. When asked why they preferred the *dai* to conduct their delivery instead of their own mother, one of the

reasons the women gave was "she washes her hands with soap and brush."

Social Change

Our evaluation revealed that these material achievements were but an outward sign of a deeper change in the *dais* and their peer group as a whole. As an example we may give the case of Gangubai. She is 35 years, is married and was trained in the first batch three years ago. She has five children and her family possesses some agricultural land which does not support them. Consequently, she and her husband worked as labourers to augment the family income. Gangubai inherited the role of village *dai* from her mother-in-law and had been practising only a year before she was inducted for the training.

Till three years ago Gangubai was a habitually depressed person and was exploited by her family. Her husband was an alcoholic and wife-beater, was suffering from venereal disease and frequently absented himself from work.

Anyone who sees Gangubai today would find it impossible to believe what her life was like three years ago. Through frequent contacts with her comrades and the base hospital, and the opportunity she had of developing her latent talents, she has gained confidence in herself and has assumed a leadership role within her own village community of women. From a professional point of view, she was deemed the best *dai* in one year and all her ante-natal cases report voluntarily for examination in their first trimester.

In addition, her household role has been reversed and for all practical purposes she has become the head of the family. As a leader of the village, she has been able to organise among women an informal labour cooperative that takes contracts on building sites, road construction and farms. They take a job, complete it in record time and share the money paid for the contract.

Gangubai is obviously the best of the lot. But other cases could be given. There is for example the case of the food-for-work contractor who would not pay the workers the full amount. The new-found self-confidence enabled the women to approach the *tahsildar*, find out the just wage due to them, go on strike against the contractor and win a just wage.

What are the factors that contributed to this change of

Scheduled Caste women who, till recently, took things in a sense of fatalism, to become active and make small beginnings in the direction of changing their community? The first factor is a definite class bias of this programme. Initially it was not a conscious choice, but as we grew in the understanding of the local structures, we gave it a definite slant.

The initial class bias was possible because mid-wifery and medical practice are considered a low caste profession. As a result, most of the women we trained belonged to the Scheduled Castes. Slowly, also the prime consumers turned out to be women belonging to the weakest sections. Theoretically, any man, woman or child can be a beneficiary. However, our emphasis was on undernourished children and pregnant women, most of whom belong to the group of landless agricultural labourers and Scheduled Castes.

Consequently, the prime 'consumers' of the services are women. The evaluator, Mrs Maitreyee Mukyopadhyay found that in five villages she visited in a week, 80 per cent of the women attending the ante-natal clinics belonged to the solid proletariate stock of the Scheduled Castes on their way to work or before cooking their daily meal. Another aspect that has given a class bias to the consumers is the pollution concept of the caste system. Whereas the labourer women have the freedom to move about associated with their income-earning role, the upper caste Marathas lock their women away in their houses. They are rarely given the opportunity to participate in anything outside the precincts of their homes. The wealthier families prefer to call the *dai* to attend deliveries when there are difficulties or to serve them on an individualised level in the privacy of their homes. They do not want to mix with the low-caste women, and prefer to treat the *dai* and health worker as their personal hand-maidens rather than as professionals dispensing a meaningful service.

This separation of castes, viewed within the participatory training, health education and decision-making process, explains the change that has come about among the *dais* and their peer group. There has been a conscious attempt to invest the *dai* and the community health worker's position with power and status, attributes which the women who actively associate with them share. The social dynamics involved in this process are extremely

subtle and can be appreciated only when viewed within the socio-economic background and their state of oppression.

Self-Image

The change that has come about among the *dais* can best be summarised in the words of Manisha Khale, the nutritionist of our project, who said in exasperation, 'These *dais* sit on my head.' This provides a clue to the transformation of the self-image of the *dais*. Persons who, till three years ago, were only used to receiving orders, many of them unjust, could now take decisions and even make demands on the project staff. Persons who were yesterday part of the culture of silence are today able to relate as equals with highly-trained professionals.

This change of self-image can be seen also in their motivation and preception of their role. They perceive their role as social workers in their village i.e. as persons giving a service selflessly for the good of the community. That it was not a stock response but that they considered this role a privilege, was evident also from the response of the 'consumers' and the behaviour of the *dais*. Prior to their training they were considered low-status persons because of ritual pollution associated with child-birth. But their bi-monthly training and the change in the health status they have been able to bring about in the village, has given them a new sense of pride.

There certainly is great confusion in their mind and that of the villagers, concerning their role and remuneration for their work. The project staff assumes that the *dai* is primarily a village institution like the barber and the blacksmith and that she should be compensated for her services by the people whom she serves. The project contribution is only given to encourage her to practise what she has been taught during her training.

The net outcome is that the *dai* depends only on the project remuneration which is inadequate for the time and trouble she puts in for each pregnancy. Whereas before it was the custom never to allow a *dai* to leave the house empty-handed after a delivery, this convention has since been discontinued. The stock answer the *dais* give for this change of attitude is that people now consider them government servants and think that they should be paid by the Government. However, the reasons are probably more complex, because this change in practice is in

direct contradiction with other facts. More and more women take advantage of her services, thus demonstrating their faith in her competence and capability. Besides, the consumers hold her in high esteem both as a professional and a social worker.

While the first reaction to this lack of remuneration may be to say that our training has been counter-productive and has taken her away from her peer group, a deeper analysis of the situation would probably provide us with a better answer. Prior to her training, a very small minority that could afford to compensate her for her services utilized her services for post-natal ministration. Today her clientele has widened to include primarily the poorest women, most of whom cannot afford to pay her for her services.

In fact, most women stated that the *dai* has never pressed them for payment. This does not imply that she should not but only shows that she considers payment of secondary importance. The main reason is that the new found role of the *dai* responds to the expectations of her new reference group—the project people. She considers herself as belonging to a team of professionals where her worth is judged by the extent of her coverage of ante-natal cases and the extent to which she has conformed to the delivery practices taught her during her training. She relies for her rewards and punishments on the new peer group she has joined. Thus, though the *dais* grumbled that they were not being compensated sufficiently, this has had no adverse effect on their performance or output. There is so much group pressure to perform that the satisfaction lies in being recognised. Most of the *dais* are extremely anxious about losing their clientele, because this loss implies a lessening of their status in their reference group. Thus they feel that if they press poor women to pay beyond their means, they will not consider it an advantage to refer to the *dai*. The *dais* in their turn mentioned that most of the poor households they served were in such poor economic conditions that there was no question of seeking remuneration from them.

In other words, the power they derive from their association with the project, as being members of a team, is something which each one of them holds dear and is an important motivating force for them to perform well consistently. Apart from the fact of belonging to a wider group, the *dais* derive satisfaction

also from the support they receive from the professionals of the project. The fact that they have the power to refer patients to the hospital at Pachod or get an ambulance in case of necessity, adds to their status. Besides, the village community of women attach great importance to the continuing training the *dais* receive and take pride in their own association with them. In fact, the main reasons the 'consumers' gave for preferring them to the government trained dais, are that they are more educated because of their continuing training, they command the services of the visiting nurse and the hospital, are clean and do not demand remuneration.

We on our part have deliberately promoted this self-image. A *dai* has easy access to all the professionals attached to the hospital. Regular group meetings and in-service training guarantee their work. Praise for their achievements is consistently given. The nurses and the doctor make it clear to the community that the *dai* and the CHW are important members of the team and in village clinics the nurse keeps a low profile. The *dais* or the CHWs are made to examine the pregnant women or the sick children and the nurses or doctor only supplement their efforts.

Opposition

That also vested interests viewed these changes as a progress of the deprived sections became clear through many instances. Take, for example, Harshi village. Thirty five landless families, most of them belonging to the Scheduled Castes, decided in 1978, to buy a cow each under the IRDP scheme. The IRDP officers informed us that the project could be taken up for 25% subsidy and that we would have to get the remaining 75% from the village credit cooperative.

When these families approached the cooperative, they realised that it was controlled exclusively by the high caste landlords and no one outside this group could get loans from it. The IRDP officials permitted loans to be taken from the commercial banks but the local bank staff would not give the landless people any loan without a security which they could not provide. Finally, when 25 of these families marched to the bank's Regional Agricultural Manager two hundred kms away, he agreed to provide them with loans under the group guarantee scheme. These formalities took over a year.

Thus cows were bought, but the landless people did not have fodder and they approached the Forest Officer. The officer readily agreed to help the people plant kububul trees (for green fodder) and grass (for dry fodder) if the village *panchayat* agreed to free the common pasture land for this purpose. At first, the *panchayat* leaders gave pretexts such as 'we have to get the *tahsildar's* permission.' When they were told that the forest department would attend to all the formalities, they decided to have another meeting. After this meeting they informed the forest department that the officials only needed to supply the village with ten thousand kububul saplings and that the *panchayat* would develop the pasture land.

At first we considered this an important sign of the village leaders' cooperation and a major victory. Now, after two years, the people have not got out of their misery and we are the wiser for that. The *panchayat* is controlled by the landlords and all the saplings have been planted on the bunds of their own land. Not one plant has reached the landless labourers.

The Khadgaon *panchayat* went one step ahead. After negotiations, the leaders agreed to hand the pasture land over to the forest department for development into a Kububul trees cum grass land, while the village retained its ownership. Today the trees have grown and the grass is flourishing. But not a blade of grass has reached the landless labourers. The *panchayat* sells the grass to outsiders at the rate of Rs 120 per acre and the Kububul leaves at a very high price.

Through these and other experiences we have come to realise that the pasture land is under the exclusive control of the *panchayat* which is completely in the hands of the landowners. The biggest landowner is ordinarily the *panchayat sarpanch*. Those who control the *panchayat* view the progress of the landless labourers as a threat to their own domination, because their riches depend on the poverty of others. Hence the benefits of the pasture land or of any other scheme will never reach the landless or the Scheduled Castes.

We have realised that alternatives have to be found to strengthen the weaker sections. As a temporary measure, we are growing kububul trees and grass on our own land and selling fodder to those who have bought cows. But this is only a temporary measure, and in the meantime, a long-term programme is being

planned to help the people to work in cooperation. They have to be helped to acquire land, to cultivate fodder and cereals on it, on a cooperative basis. Community tube-wells have to be bored and common gobar gas plants built. Only this integrated development that emerges out of their unity can help them to stand up to those who have a vested interest in their state of continued oppression.

CONCLUSION

What we have noticed here is a process through which what had started as a purely medical programme catering to the health needs of the population has turned into a catalyst for social change, especially among the Scheduled Caste women, the weakest sections of society. That in itself is not surprising, because the denial of the right to health and nutrition is the result of an unjust social system. Decisions are taken and technology chosen according to the needs of the dominant sections of our society. As a result, those who are left out of the dscision-making process are also deprived of their right to the essential services.

> Formation of alternatives is thus essentially a political question. A crucial determinant of the nature of an alternative is whether a country is to be ruled by an oligarchy or whether it actively promotes a change in the social system which enables the masses, particularly the underprivileged and the underserved, to actively participate and to have their say in the affairs of their country.[7]

As far as our project is concerned, we did not have any such vision at first, for we viewed ourselves primarily as medical persons and were not fully aware of the social dynamics in operation in our society. However, from the beginning we decided that we would trust the people to take their own decisions. Their initial reaction certainly disappointed us, but we had to accept the reality that health was a low priority to them, for till then they had viewed it only as a curative system. They had more important things to attend to if they were to survive in a society that treated them as sub-humans.

[7]D. Banerjee, 'Formulating an Alternative Rural Health Care System, in J.P. Naik (ed.), *An Alternative System of Health Care Service in India: Some Proposals* (New Delhi : Allied Publishers, 1977), p.33.

Ultimately, it is this trust in the people and the constant feedback we got from them, that started a process. We cannot call ourselves a people's movement because we are still at an early stage of the process. What we know is that the participatory process has paid dividends. As far as the material achievements are concerned, we know that the *dai* can function in the village, with perhaps slightly reduced efficiency, even if we pull out of the project area. But we know that the process that was set in motion by this programme cannot stop at medicine. The growth of this community may need our support for some more time. But we have to let the people take their own decisions and ourselves become only facilitators of change. They and they alone can be the change-agents of their society.

Concurrently, we need to keep reflecting on our work and get feedback from the people. We have realised, for example, that our effort at coordinating our work with the Government, though helpful at first, has had a few negative effects. In the choice of the Community Health Workers, we kept to the government standard of choosing girls who had studied at least up to the sixth standard. This limited our choice and excluded the most underprivileged who could have become leaders of their peer group just like the *dais*. Moreover, while the *dai* has the possibility of group interaction and, as a result, interacting with the whole community together, the CHW can only visit families and counsel individual mothers. Consequently, she has not yet become a village institution like the *dai*. We have to help the community to reflect on her role and, if necessary, change it. Moreover, because of the literacy qualifications required, we have been able to train CHWs in only nineteen villages.

In other words, in the choice of the CHWs as well as in a few other aspects, we did not take the local socio-economic situation into consideration. One more such example is our refusal to accept any nutritional supplements. That in itself is a good decision, because we are aware that in many cases what is called food aid has turned into permanent relief and has been an obstacle to self-reliance. People have become dependent on external aid.

On the other hand, we are now aware that just teaching the parents to improve the nutritional value of the food they already have, cannot solve the problem, because many of them just do

not have sufficient food. The underpaid agricultural labourers can hardly afford to think in terms of nutrition beyond what is required for their subsistence. Hence we have to help the people to tackle this social problem, and while tackling it, have to find some short-term economic support.

In spite of these shortcomings, we are aware that even the neglected sections, and others like the CHWs, have benefited enormously from their association with the project. In the case of the CHWs, it is the privilege of being part of a team. Though they are considered employees of the project because they are paid a monthly honorarium, in the interviews with them it became evident that they too considered themselves as social workers, as persons giving a selfless service. In other words, as in the case of the *dais*, also the CHWs' motivation springs, to a great extent, from the status they enjoy.

To put it briefly, the project has raised the status of women in general and of the Scheduled Caste women in particular. The change of their self-image has led to their beginning to work in cooperation. In some villages they have already started a few economic programmes such as dairying on a cooperative basis, thus breaking the age-old grip of the contractors over their economy.

It has not been a one-sided change. We, the professionals, have received at least as much as we have given. We have seen the richness of knowledge existing in persons who are considered ignorant, their potential to be change-agents and the strength of their determination. We have realised that our professional knowledge cannot change the people, but can only support them. We have grown as a result of this interaction with the people.

However, at this stage we are not certain about the role of men. Though women have made immense progress, it is obvious that we still have a long way to go. The infant mortality and malnutrition statistics, for example, show that the proportion of girls in these categories is more than double that of boys. It is clear from this that though we have made a dent in the exploitative situation of Scheduled Caste women, we have been only partially successful in changing the sex bias in their outlook on children.

This requires the education and cooperation of men, and at this stage we are not clear about the role they play in our pro-

ject. If they feel left out, they may react and the whole movement of women's organisation can receive a setback. While it is important to pay special attention to women who are the most exploited group, the process should now go towards a movement of total development involving all the deprived persons, especially the Scheduled Castes. And that is the challenge of the future!

8

Exploding Myths: The Participants Evaluate

Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

This paper is presented in the form of case studies which attempt to present a first-person point of view: an evaluation, so to speak, from the inside. In using this method, I have tried to present some social and cultural factors from the participants' point of view: factors which are usually not taken into consideration in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes.

These case studies are not, in the strict sense of the term, instances of 'participatory evaluation'. Participants are not making the evaluation consciously and with a view to changing the situation. The studies present cases of the participants' understanding rather than of their critical assessment of a situation.

Data for the case studies has been collected over a number of sessions of participant observation, innumerable unstructured interviews and gossip sessions, during the course of my work as an anthropologist with two nutrition projects in Tamilnadu and my work on a team which made a qualitative assessment in 1979, of all types of feeding programmes.

The first two case studies, *The Pre-Schooler* and *The Pregnant Woman* are about feeding programmes. They relate to the assumption made in feeding programmes, that the food that is distributed gets to the intended 'beneficiary' The third case on *The Mother* relates to nutrition education and the assumption

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that 'knowledge' leads to 'action.' The fourth case study, *The Tribal* is on a related subject—that 'teaching' automatically leads to 'learning.' The fifth case, *The Agency* is on community self-reliance and the relationship between the catalytic agency and the community. Finally, *The Lion and the Crow* presents in parable form, a doubt which catalytic agencies cannot but have felt at some time or another: 'Is self-reliance a felt need of the community? Specifically of an Indian? Of a community in India?'

THE PRE SCHOOLER

I am hungry. But mother hasn't come home from work. She will buy the rice on the way home and maybe today, even some pickle; and then she will cook us a hot meal. I collected the wood on the way home from school. So she can cook today.

My little brother is crying and my big sister is pretending she can't smell the lovely food my mother is making for us. Today she was able to buy some *dal* and chillies as well! It smells so good.

We sit down to eat. I start gulping as fast as I can. I look up. My mother is tired. But she is always like that. My sister has finished her food and is looking at my plate. I want that food on my plate. But my sister is looking and she is bigger than me. She needs the food more. I put a handful of my rice on her plate. 'What are you doing?' mother says, 'Eat your own food. You have to go to school. You have to be strong.' My mother doesn't know anything. I go to school. But my sister doesn't. She has to stay at home and look after the baby. I talk and play in school. My sister stays at home.

Teacher says, 'Come on, Come on, eat up your food.' I can see my sister and my baby brother waiting outside. There are other brothers and sisters there: and the old woman who tells us beautiful stories when she is right in the head. I eat some of my food. The teacher has gone out to give a handful of food to the old woman. She used to tell him stories when he was young. I quickly wrap up the rest of my food in a paper and walk out of the classroom, not looking this side or that. I pass the teacher. He looks down. He sees the paper packet. Softly he says, 'Go. Wash your hands and come.'

I give the paper packet to my sister. She leaves. My brother is already grabbing at the packet. Last night's rice we ate in the morning. What was left, my father took to the fields. Now we will all be able to wait for the food at night. Maybe today too she will bring back some surprise. A piece of meat. Maybe. Sometimes she does.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN

I am heavy with child again. My milk has stopped. Balu, on my hips, whimpers in hunger and sucks at my breast in useless hope. The milk wasn't enough anyway. Balu has been getting thinner and thinner.

I cannot remember a time when I have not been pregnant or suckling a child. The first two children were a joy. Even the third. I was strong. I went back to work within weeks of having the baby. There always seemed to be enough food in the house, and on festival days we usually managed to get new clothes for the children, sometimes even for ourselves. Of course, we used to borrow off and on. We pay interest, like everyone else, but he is not a bad man. He often gives me rice or some chillies when my husband doesn't have a job and he doesn't increase the interest too much either.

But after my other children and now this one, I am no longer able to work. I am so tired all the time. I squat down in the queue waiting for my turn to collect the food the government is giving. It is a strange food. They give some mushy stuff. At home I add some chillies and the children have it at night. Some people have two cards, but I have only one. The card is for me, because I am pregnant. I have agreed to have the operation after this baby. I would have had it earlier; only one needs at least two sons and Balu is my second son. But I am frightened. Balu is so weak. He is sick all the time. And although I have five living children, I have lost two—both boys.

'Come on' says the fat woman who is giving out the food, 'What are you dreaming about? You don't want food today?' She fills my bowl. 'Now sit down and eat,' she says as she marks my card. 'This food is for the baby in your stomach. Unless you eat it, the baby won't be strong. You don't want another weak child like this one on your hip, do you ?'

I sit quietly on one side. I have got used to taking this free food. At first, I used to feel a little ashamed—are we so poor that we must take charity? Anyway, now I have got used to it. It is our fate! But this I will never do! Eat the food by myself—here in the open, in front of everybody? What will people say—eating in the open as if I didn't have a house! *And* eating by myself when everybody knows that I have five children and my husband is out of work!

I put a little food in my mouth and then wrap my sari around the plate. I get up and slowly start walking away. But the fat lady sees me. 'What! finished already? How you all cheat—and what am I to say to the big officer when he comes? Then I have to answer, not you. Go! Go! you will never understand,' she sighs. But the fat lady understands.

THE MOTHER

Kamalamma is talking a lot today. It must be because some people have come in a jeep and one of the ladies is sitting with us under the banyan tree. Kamalamma is showing us the big paper with the fat child on it. She asks questions sometimes. Today she says to me 'You tell me Pushpa—why is this baby so healthy-looking?'

'Because his mother gave him solid food from the time he was six months old.' That was easy. I have answered it many times before. Kamalamma is talking about something else. I wonder when they will give the food and oil. It is very late today.

The lady who came in the jeep comes and sits next to me.

Pappu is asleep in my lap.

'How old is he?'

'One year,' I say

'You feed him?'

'Yes.'

'Is your milk enough for him?'

'Yes.'

'You are lucky' she says, 'my milk wasn't enough for my baby for even six months. I had to give him powder milk from a tin.'

Poor woman, I thought; all that expense of buying tins of milk. Or maybe she got it from somebody, like they used to give us here.

'Did you get the powder from a centre like we used to get from here?' I ask her.

'No...but don't they give you milk powder? What do they give on your baby's card?'

She looked a kind lady—maybe she would help. So I tell her, 'Now they don't give the milk powder separately. They mix it with some other flour. They say if they give milk powder separately then we use it up for tea and the baby should get all the milk. Can't you tell them not to do that? You are their officer?'

'What do your other children drink?' she asks

'Tea. But milk, Pappu used to drink most of it. I kept a little for tea for the other children and sometimes for my husband. Now, this flour, I mix some wheat flour with it and make *rotis*. The children have them in the morning and it lasts only for a few days'.

'And Pappu—does he like the *rotis*?'

I look at her. She must be from some other place. I can't help giggling. 'Why do you laugh?' she says, 'Am I funny?' 'No, no!' I tell her quickly. 'Only, how can Pappu eat *rotis*? He is only one year old. Milk he needs.'

'Have you tried cooking the flour they give you with water, so that Pappu can have it? He can almost just drink it—he won't have to bite.' She *must* be from some other place. 'How can I give this strange food to a baby?' I ask. 'He is one, not even one, I think. It is *milk* he needs. You also gave your baby powder milk. You didn't mix it with flour, did you?'

'No, but I gave him some rice—all mashed up soft with dal,' she says. 'That I will,' I tell her, 'when the time comes. He is too young for all that now. Milk he needs.'

'Nothing else he has?' she asks me.

'He likes biscuits. But those I can buy only sometimes.

Anyway he can't eat biscuits every day! He will get diarrhoea.'

'But you just told that lady there that the baby on the paper was healthy looking because he ate solid food. And you don't give your baby solid food? You don't want him to be healthy?'

'Oh! That! that is what Kamalamma has to teach us and we have to answer right! Who gives such a small child solid food? That is only talk. Pappu is not fat like the picture but that is a picture after all. You see the other children in my village? They

are all like Pappu. In a few months I will start giving him some rice. That is what everyone does. No one gives this early. When the child can walk and grab his own food, *that* is when one gives him rice. My mother always says. You ask anyone.' I tell her.

She smiles at me, gets up and goes to sit near Sarala, on the other side. Poor woman. I hope her child doesn't fall ill, eating *dal* and all that. But Sarala will tell her. She is good at talking.

THE TRIBAL

Neither I nor my fathers and forefathers before me would ever have dreamt that such a thing were possible. I have burnt forests, cast seed upon the soil and reaped whatever harvest the earth yielded. I have wandered from place to place living like this—my bundle on my head, my women and children about me. And now I am rooted to the land I own. I am proud but I am puzzled. Where do I begin? I have seen farmers work. I have even worked in their fields sometimes when there was no food to put into my children's mouths.

I have been given this land by the Government. But I own no plough, no oxen. I will need them if this one piece of land is to keep me from hunger. The Government men come and made me put my thumb-mark on a paper and after many days they brought me a plough and an ox. I have to pay for the plough and the ox, little by little, they tell me.

How do I feed the ox? How do I harness the plough? They come and teach me; I do not understand. They talk and talk and still I do not know. I try. I cannot do it. They tell me again and go away calling me a fool.

I burn the forests and grow my food. But I try to bring food from my own land too. I tell myself 'these men from the city—they have talked to me about my land. But in the city there is no land. How do they know what is to be done? Maybe someone told them—maybe they read it in big books. That is no way to learn! I know that and that is more than they know.

So I try again. I look at other farmers. I ask questions. Meantime, I burn forests and I live. But slowly I am learning. The months go by, the years. And one year the green sheaves wave gentle on my land. The beginning of my learning has ended. Now my learning begins. I look, I ask, I try as I have done

before. And this year there is more food for my children. I have not had to burn the forests. Next year and the next and in the years to come I will build upon what I have learnt.

Maybe I can tell the city men how to teach. But you cannot teach learning.

THE AGENCY

The rains have come. For Gyanpur, drought and famine will soon become part of that long memory of ever-recurring events.

I walk around the village. People have never known it so good—newly dug wells, clothes, food, medicines—all doled out by the number of generous people and organisations that came to their rescue. 'Namaste Babu,'—I meet with a smile and a grateful nod from everyone. But I am angry! I am thanked. I am looked up to. I am sought out for all sorts of advice. I feel my anger and I must face it. I did all I did for my own sake—the satisfaction of filling a child's empty bowl, of seeing the mother smile—the glow that comes from helping others. This then is what I did it for. Not for them. No!

What next? When I and the organisation that is behind me leave, what is left? Grateful people who will now feel that whatever happens, *someone* will come to their help. Hungry children, starved old men—it is all part of a familiar landscape. Things have been good for a while, but luck will not last. That is fate after all.

I walk on. I stop by the pond where the buffaloes lie content in cool waters, as if those waters have always been and will always be, totally forgetful that only weeks away this was parched land and in times to come will be so again. Under the far peepul tree sits a silent figure, all drooping lines. I walk across. It is my friend Ram.

'Why?' I ask.

Ram looks up—a trace of a smile. 'Why not? You have come. Your heart is full. You will go. My heart too has been full. But I stay here. And what will keep my heart filled? For weeks we have worked fourteen, sixteen hours a day. I have never been so tired, so happy. But now? What do I do? Listen to the transistor. Irritate my mother. Look at the girls at the well....

Suddenly he asks: 'Why did you come? We have starved

before. We would have again. But after this I cannot see it. I will not!'...Quieter...'But how? You are here now. You were not here before. You will not be here again. I stay. How? You can tell me how'...And there are hundreds, thousands of hundreds of men and women like Ram, with no jobs, some education, all potential to be tapped...for 'development.' But this I did not know then. To Ram I only said, 'Me? But...I must go back...my family....'

Ram, as he gets up to leave, 'Yes. You must go. You must go to where you belong.'... Wait, there must be something. ...Isn't there a way I can help. Maybe I can find you a job where I work. Maybe....

'Namaste Babu' from Meenabai, the old gossip. 'I hear you are going away. I tell you, take all these young rascals away with you! All these days they have been busy. Now they will be up to their old mischief—eating up their fathers' money at the tea-shop talking—talking, that's, all they know. What good are they for?'

Ram will not take this. 'Why! you old witch! Who built your house for you? Who dug a well in your backyard? It was not Rattanbabu here. We did it—I and my friends.'

The thought came to Ram and me at the same time—'That's the answer!' I said, 'perhaps that is what we should do...*We did* do it ourselves, didn't we? 'Did it yourselves? You had Rattanbabu telling you what to do, pushing you. What can you do by yourself?' taunted Meenabai. ...But Ram was far ahead. 'We need a school. The elders have said so, so often. We will ask them.'

Mohan had joined us as we talked. He caught the thread. 'Ram, I know! Let us call a meeting of everyboby who is interested. The old men can give money. Mothers will give—children will no longer have to walk half an hour to school. *You* will help Meenabai, won't yon? You can get the women together?'

Even Meenabai was excited. 'I will see that they come. Don't worry. Under the peepul. We will talk and plan and then you will do. My sons, you have indeed become strong...' and Meenabai hurried away, a new purpose in her walk....

That is how it began. Gyanpur got together. They talked, they argued and they talked again. Some said 'A road first. Then we can get to the market soon.' Others said 'A school. Let

our children walk less first.' I stayed a few days. I said a few words sometimes. They told me how I could help. They would build the school, the road. Maybe I could get the engineer from the district to come and guide them? Maybe I knew where they could get a loan?....

It is some years now. I had been away and back. I hear that my organisation is giving food for children in a school in Gyanpur. It is a sturdy building. I hear Meenabai shouting 'Come on, you lazy ones. All this trouble I take and you can't even bring your plates and sit down!'

I seek out Ram. 'Who...? Rattanbabu! Where have you been? How?' We talk and talk. He tells of how Gyanpur has grown, how the *panchayat* helped, how the Block and District officials helped. 'But we did it ourselves,' says Ram, all self-confidence. 'Mohan and I and all the others you knew, remember? We learnt little by little. We talked of what we needed and how to get it. We learnt of what the Government can do for us. And others: your organisation, the hospital in town. We work hard. We know who can help us. But in the end, one has to do things for oneself, isn't it?'

And in his happiness he laughed, 'I will tell you who works the hardest. Mohan. I could never do it. He fills in all those forms. All day sometimes he fills forms. He goes to the town and back. He visits offices again and again. And then he fills in more forms. But we get the loans and the seeds—the pump sets and electricity—the food from your office—the doctor from the hospital.

There is more to do. We will. There is time. But you are here now. Come, come and eat with us.'

I smile. Ram has given me peace with myself. I have learnt.

THE LION AND THE CROW

Once upon a time—and time again—there lives a Lion in a very big jungle with lots of animals of different kinds. The Lion is the lord of the jungle. It likes helping all the other animals in the jungle. He is very paternalistic. He enjoys having the other animals say 'thank-you' and being his friends. He doesn't want them to be frightened and running away from him.

The Lion doesn't like not being liked. After all, it needs only

one animal a day to eat. And he has come to a very sensible arrangement with the other animals. They decide among themselves and send the Lion one animal a day. One week it is deer; another week it is wild boar, another week it is sheep, and so on. Everyone in the jungle is happy.

Into this happy jungle, one day there came a Crow. The Crow had been away for a long time in a far away .and. It was the turn of the sheep. They were deciding among themselves as to who should go to the Lion that day. The Crow sat on the fence listening to the sheep. 'What!' said the Crow, 'sending one of your own flock as food for the Lion! Where I have been and come from, they would never do such a thing.' And the Crow put her nose up in the air.

'Why not?' said one sheep 'only one week every two months. And the rest of the time we are happy. The Lion looks after us. It even shows us where the best grass grows and takes us to other waters when our pond dries up.'

'Yes,' said another sheep, 'what do a few sheep matter? After all, death is always there—illness, accidents—something or the other. Why not like this? It is useful death. There is a purpose—the rest of us are happy.' 'Happy!' sneered the Crow, 'what does happiness matter. Surely that much you know. Don't you even know what matters?—Independence. That's what.' 'What's that?' puzzled one sheep.

The Crow nearly fell off the fence. She collected her thoughts and explained in simple language to the sheep about how they were not thinking for themselves; about how they were dependent on the Lion; about how they should be self-reliant; and a lot more of what she had learnt in her far away travels. 'You *must* learn to look after yourselves.' said the Crow sternly. 'But we like being looked after' said a sheep, mildly. 'That' said the Crow, from atop the fence, 'is neither here nor there. You don't know what you should like. *I* will tell you—I *have* told you.... Now call all the other animals in the jungle and I will talk to them. I will tell them what they should be doing.'

And all the animals came. It was a fine night and this was something new. There was nothing else to do. The Lion came. He sat where he could not be seen. The Crow sat up on the fence and talked and talked and talked. And the only answers she got were: 'But what does one sheep matter?' 'What do a

few deer matter?' 'Who will miss some dozen rabbits?' 'The animals don't mind. You see, the whole *jungle* is happy,' said patiently an elephant.

The Lion smiled to himself. He got up and went away. It would be all right for him and his sons. After that there may be some difference. Well, let tomorrow's generations look after themselves.... And that night he ate his sheep in contentment.

The Crow sat on the fence. She was tired. What other words must she use? What else to say? How to make them understand? She must try again. Go on trying . But.....should she? Maybe.....maybe it didn't matter.... Them not knowing...? No! she *must* be right. Only, she must find another way. That's it. Another way.

And the Crow sat on the fence and thought and thought; and wondered and wondered.... And the jungle went on.

Days passed as still the Crow thought on the fence. Stiff, she turned to face the other side and light dawded as dawn broke. The other side—the answer—the Lion! She would go and talk to the Lion. He is intelligent. He administers the whole jungle. He will understand.

The Crow talked and talked. The Lion grunted at appropriate intervals in picking clean a bone...silence...yawns.... 'Where's the bone of contention?' the Lion wearies. 'I appropriate nothing. It's a clean deal. There is no need to crow! They give me what I need; I give them what they need.'

'You haven't been listening! It is *your* duty to teach them: to think for themselves: to be self-reliant.... You are only thinking of yourself. How come you are the Lord of the jungle?'

'That's how.' And the Lion sauntered away, leaving the Crow on the fence with her own confusion.

9

Literacy to Development: The Growth of a Tribal Village

Manohar Singh

There are many examples in rural development where programmes have moved from one objective to another as a result of the push provided by the beneficiaries. While development projects invariably start with some external agency or group wanting to do something, very few move beyond the initial programmes developed by the sponsors. This, of course, can be due to various factors. In this case study, I have presented the shift in the emphasis of the programme as a result of the evaluations conducted by the participants whom the sponsors usually consider only beneficiaries.

BACKGROUND

Seva Mandir has been engaged in adult literacy programmes in the district of Udaipur since the early 1970s. Kherwada block has been the major focus of their attention in this respect. Starting with farmers' functional literacy programmes in the early 70s, it grew into the adult education programme under the auspices of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978.

Umara is a remote tribal village 50 kms south-west of the Kherwada Block headquarters. Situated on the border of Gujarat, the village is in a hilly forest area. It is inhabited by

about 30 tribal families with a total population of 250. While agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Umara, they also engage in wage labour for three to six months in a year. During these months, they migrate to Gujarat in search of daily wage labour. This is mainly due to their small landholdings, hilly terrain and lack of irrigation facilities. In fact, the shortage of water including drinking water is so acute that when there is no rain, they have to take their cattle to neighbouring Gujarat to get them drinking water.

In other words, lack of irrigation and drinking water facilities condition their whole life. As in most other parts of the country, also in Southern Rajasthan, the tribals are among the most exploited sections and get the worst land. Because of the quality of their land, they can at best hope for one crop which does not take them beyond a few months. During the remaining months they are unemployed and undernourished. Lack of water is a major obstacle to their owning good quality cattle. Besides, hygienic conditions are bad and their health is poor. Their family life is disrupted by their need to migrate in search of subsistence-wage daily employment elsewhere.

Despite claims about major tribal development programmes, Umara, like the remaining tribal areas, has felt very little impact of government-sponsored programmes. Unlike many other areas where a basic infrastructure has been built, though it is accessible only to the rich, the tribal lands have been totally neglected since they have got very little political strength. The village is inacessible because of lack of a link road. Agriculture and animal husbandry cannot be improved and made economically viable. The health situation continues to be miserable and the migrant tribal labour is underpaid and undernourished.

ADULT EDUCATION

It is in this unjust situation that *Seva Mandir* opened an adult education centre at Umara in 1978, under the NAEP. Thirty three adults were registered. From the beginning the local instructors as well as the field project staff felt that they should not turn it into an adult or functional literacy class. It had to be non-formal education in the proper sense of the term. The teacher-taught difference had to disappear and the classes had to be-

come a forum for open discussion on the socio-economic situation of the village and a place for beginning action to change it.

However, the project staff was aware of the backwardness of the village and therefore, apprehensive about the success of the adult education programme. One aspect of what is called backwardness is the fear the villagers have of open discussion. They belong to the culture of silence. Centuries of oppression have reduced them to a state of fatalism and helplessness and because of the internalisation of the image imposed on them by the exploiters, they consider themselves only receivers of orders, of benefits and of knowledge.

Consequently, the field project officers decided upon a step by step approach. Initially, they would have only literacy classes. They had misapprehensions even about the success of this step but they began slowly. They got a few persons together with a view to encouraging them to take responsibility for the development of their own village. The beginnings were difficult. The villagers had their whole history of passivity and fatalism behind them. Efforts had to be made and they had to be helped to acquire self-confidence. Slowly, a few began to see its usefulness and these discussions led to the evaluation of the existing situation in the village. Various aspects of social, economic and political dynamics in the village were anlaysed in detail. The history of the village and reasons for its continued underdevelopment were enumerated. The role of various development schemes of the Government were examined and the desired future of the village was hypothesised.

These discussions extending over a considerable period of time, began to generate the villagers' interest in the development of their own village. They began to understand the problems in the village and possible solutions to those problems. They realised that they are poor not because of God's will or their fate but because the decisions taken for national development ignore their needs. They understood that funds allotted for their welfare do not reach them.

Their understanding did not stop at theoretical analysis. In fact, theory alone does not take the villagers very far. They have to act and reflect together. As they discussed their problems, they slowly began to see not merely the injustice of the system

but also their own potential for change. They realised that they had to act together and that they could make a beginning towards changing their society by themselves working in cooperation with one another—by giving a bit of themselves to improve the village.

As the discussion continued, they began to realise their resources in implementing those solutions. One of the first concrete outcomes of the discussion was a decision to buiid a link road in the village. The villagers agreed to volunteer their labour as well as use food-for-work programmes for this road construction. Only Umara villagers contributed towards building the road and one could see that they were interested in the road more than their wage. Though many other villages got its benefits, they had not passed through an awareness process. As a result, they did not take part in its construction.

After the road was constructed, a series of discussions took place to evaluate the manner in which it was constructed and its outcome. Several important findings were shared by the villagers:

1. The total output was about three times the wage given. In other words, they had not depended on anyone else to do the work for them. They had given all that they had and had requested wages in the form of food-for-work only as an additional support. This wage could not be considered relief in any form. It was but a small share of the nation's riches that are their right and they have been deprived of. This enabled them to tide over the lean season by getting sustenance wages for improving the assets in their village instead of being exploited by some outsider.

2. Though they might not have been aware of all the above theoretical implications, they knew that they were doing something constructive for their village community. As a result, all those who worked on the road agreed that they did not feel any pressure to contribute their work. In fact, they said that they enjoyed working together on a constructive programme.

3. Unlike in the past when they used to begin some work without proper motivation and leave it half done, in this case the road was completed and nothing was left undone.

4. Though the fact of working together on something con-

structive was their main motivation, they realised that they had gained also materially. Since the foodgrains obtained under the food-for-work programme were shared equally by all the villagers, they had got higher daily wages (4 kg each) than what they would have got otherwise. Moreover, this equal sharing had become one more factor in cementing the unity of the tribal community.

GOING BEYOND THE VILLAGE

Our main motive in getting involved in the village was not merely constructing a road or solving a few problems but building the people. We knew that people cannot grow only through theory or only through action but that the two have to go together. In the above case the villagers had started with discussion on their situation, had acted on their findings and had, as a community, evaluated their action. The self-confidence they had gained as a result of this process would lead to further action.

However, it would be against the philosophy of human development to restrict this process to one village. What began in a small community has to spread to the rest of the area. Otherwise it can become only an island of prosperity or awareness in a sea of poverty and exploitation. Moreover, for any long-term effect, it is not enough for the oppressed to become aware of their unjust situation or potential for change. They have to build up sufficient pressure in order to change the policies of the decision-makers.

With this in view, the villagers decided to share the evaluation of their action with the *panchayat* leaders who in their turn conducted similar evaluations in other villages. They also gave feedback of these reflections to the government officers and other decision-makers. Apart from initiating a process in the neighbouring villages, it led to a change of attitude among the government functionaries.

1. Up to now the officials had functioned on the age-old stereotype that the tribals are lazy and do not want to work. This action and its feedback made them realise that the backwardness of the area was not the result of laziness but had other factors —lethargy of the bureaucrats being one of them. Given proper

motivation, they are capable of working for a change in their situation.

2. The functionaries had so far taken for granted that the tribals were ignorant and were incapable of taking any decision. This group action showed, if proof was required, that the tribals are not ignorant and are capable of taking responsiblity, provided they pass through a process and receive initial encouragement.

3. It was also realised that for the above changes to take place, the procedure adopted during the work was useful. The villagers had, as a group, decided that they needed this road. In other words, their personal motivation was tapped which is not the case with most Block or *panchayat*-sponsored projects where the villagers become only wage-earners.

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT

Apart from contributing to the beginning of a process in the neighbouring villages and change in the attitude of government functionaries, the process of participatory evaluation led to increased self-confidence in the villagers. This in its turn, enhanced their interest in the Centre which led to the beginning of greater development in the village.

This concept of total development itself emanated from the experiences and evaluation of the Umara villagers during the previous year. As a result, *Seva Mandir* which had originally thought of various target-oriented projects, slowly changed its approach. Now it had to play its role primarily in a supportive capacity. When in June 1979 *Seva Mandir* launched a scheme of Community Education and Rural Development, it could easily choose Umara as one of the villages since its inhabitants had felt the need of such a programme. Though they expressed it in simpler terms, we viewed it as total development of the community.

The emphasis in this effort was to build on people's desire to take responsibility and get themselves organised for common objectives. After a series of discussions with the villagers, a hamlet-based organisation was created. In this organisation, groups of five households each were formed with one representative selected by them. De-centralisation and direct participation by every household were the main motives behind this organisational structure.

In the early phase, the villagers asked the field-worker to conduct a survey of the potentialities of the village for development. Acceding to this request would have been counter-productive since it would have led to an outside 'expert' conducting a survey and making the people dependent on him. On the other hand, the field-worker could not dissociate himself completely from the process. Hence discussion was started again and it was decided that the field-worker and the tribals would work together and pool their knowledge. Thus this survey was conducted with the villagers and the information so obtained was fed back to them in the meeting of their representatives.

As a result of this, the villagers decided to launch several community schemes. The first one was to build a community centre for their common activities: They identified a place, contributed their labour and constructed it in record time. Both the decision-making process and the construction of the centre brought the community together and strengthened their bonds.

This action led to further reflection in the community and more action. Seen from a purely material point of view, their action led to what can be called development projects. But they had emerged out of common thinking by the whole village. Initially we had thought of literacy as a priority, but the tribals did not see much meaning in it. After this evaluation they saw the need of a school for their children and they built it themselves not because we told them to do so but because they wanted it. Irrigation facilities were poor. However, now they realised that they could build upon what they had. So they decided to clean and renovate the village pond. It would obviously not provide them with a long-term solution to the problem of water shortage. It will dry up in a year of drought. But it was a slow beginning from which they gained more confidence in their ability to change their society.

After the renovation of the pond, their common reflection showed them the possibilities of improving their agricultural practices. Thus they were able to go beyond a sustenance economy. Their working together gave them confidence in their ability to manage their own affairs. So they decided to run the school on their own. Twenty-five children attend it. All these actions have led to better organisation among the villagers and more action-reflection-action. The Block and the remaining state

facilities that were so far monopolised by the powerful are today more accessible to them. The neighbouring villages have learnt from Umara and are beginning a process of their own.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

A study of the change that has taken place at Umara over the past three years brings out, among others, the following points :

1. The most important change noticeable in Umara is a feeling of inter-dependent, collective community. Earlier, the villagers lived in their own households, fairly isolated from each other. Having worked on some of the above-mentioned projects together, they developed a sense of common purpose.

2. There is a perceptible change in their attitudes toward manual labour. Earlier, work was only a tool to earn wages and the gains went to someone else. Even when it was for the Block-sponsored projects such as road-building, the people viewed themselves only as wage-earners and the Government as the employer. Now they realised that work can be creative—that they are the producers and that their manual labour can be used for their own development, not someone else's profit.

3. It is clear that a series of discussions before the construction of the road and the intensive evaluation following it were important turning points in the shift from literacy to development. They were also important from the point of view of enhancing their self-confidence which led to further action-reflection-action. They began to view themselves as decision-makers and actors, not merely as beneficiaries. Participatory evaluation played a major role in this change of attitudes.

4. Finally, it became clear to many of the field workers that development is people's own business. We cannot develop them. We can only assist. Hence, participation is not a matter of mere strategy but is a philosophy of life which begins with trust in the people.

CONCLUSION

There is an age-old Confucian saying which goes more or less as follows:

> When I was still a man of the world, I used to see trees and streams and forests and hills. But they were nothing more than ordinary material things whose benefits I enjoyed. Then I passed through the second stage of searching for a meaning. Then all was darkness. I saw neither the world nor its trees, and streams and forests and hills. Finally, I reached the third stage of contemplation and Enlightenment. I saw the same trees and streams and forests and hills. But now they were not the same old things I saw when I was a man of the world. Now I saw them through totally different eyes. They signified to me the power of nature, the creativity of man and new life.

With proper modifications, this saying can be applied to the process the Bhil tribals of Umara have passed through. In the past there have been some government or privately sponsored projects in that area. But in all of them, the people were viewed only as beneficiaries who *received* something from others. While improving the economic situation of a few, they did not lead to their development as human beings. If ever, they led to the deterioration in their state of dependence since it confirmed them in their self-image as persons only fit to *receive* orders from their masters or favours from their benefactors.

If allowed to take a purely project approach, also the above programme would have followed the same path and confirmed them in their state of dependence. But the process they passed through changed all the development programmes into a new life-giving source of community building and their growth as human beings. Like Confucius, also the tribals of Umara had to pass through an age of darkness. They expected the field-workers to do everything for them and could not understand why they refused to do what they thought was their duty. It was also an age of darkness for the field-workers because initially the response to a human development process was poor.

Looking back at the last three years, we realise today that this is an essential step in the growth of the people. They can grow neither at the pace nor the direction set by the voluntary organisation. The community has to set its own pace and decide its own direction. It may not be as fast as the impatient field-worker would like it to be. It may not be target-oriented like the material-based development projects. It is a slow process.

Through this process, the villagers have come to what looks externally like the classical development projects. But, like

Confucian trees and streams and forests and hills, also these roads and centres and schools and ponds do not have the same meaning any more. They have become tools, not of making the people dependent on the external agency, but of helping them to acquire a new sense of confidence in their ability to change their society. They have given them a new sense of identity and a new sense of unity. They have started going beyond their individualism to become conscious of their tribal solidarity. Manual work has taken a new meaning—no more as a tool of exploitation but of creativity and growth.

It has been a process of growth also for the field workers of *Seva Mandir*. From the initial project workers who, if not properly guided, could have become 'doers' of everything, they have learnt to become catalytic agents. They realise that the people have to grow and that any outsider can only be a supportive element.

However, the process is not complete. There is always the danger of the people thinking primarily or exclusively in terms of material gains. A balance has to be kept between the benefits received and the socio-political process of the people. The momentum of consciousness-building should not be lost. These gains should not lull them into a sense of security. We have taken many big steps, but we still have a long way to go. The people will take the direction they want. We shall have to watch and see in what way we can be of help or when we should withdraw. This is the new relationship between the external agency and the people that we have to grow into.

10

Participatory Evaluation of an Adult Education Programme

MVD Bogaert, S. Bhagat and N.B. Bam

This short case study owes its origin to a workshop at the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi, for officials and field workers of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on developing tools for evaluating learners progress. As an offshoot of this workshop, the adult education programme of XISS was evaluated. This paper describes the process, content and outcome of this evaluation.

BACKGROUND

Bero Block is 35 kms South-West of Ranchi. The Calcutta-Bombay national highway passes through the Block and the place is growing into a small town. It is an important potato and other vegetable growing centre. Cash crop farming is gradually replacing subsistence agriculture in the Block and tribal farmers who constitute the majority of the inhabitants, have begun to participate in this process.

The Block had 114 villages in 1971 and its 12,606 occupied households had a total population of 67,843 which reflected the unfavourable sex bias against women since there were only 33,692 females against 34,151 males. The Scheduled Castes formed a little over 2 per cent of the population while over 60 per cent i.e. 41,000 belonged to the Scheduled Tribes. Only

12,297 i.e. 18.12 per cent were literate but the literacy rate was only 9.12 per cent among women and about 26 per cent among men. Also the labour force showed a similar situation. Out of a total of 25,378 workers only 7,575 were women. The workers were predominently cultivators and only about 20 per cent were agricultural labourers and a minuscule minority engaged in activities like forestry and fishing.

Low literacy was not necessarily because of lack of the delivery system because the area has 73 primary, 13 middle and 5 high schools. Health facilities are poor, with only two hospitals, one family welfare centre and five other health centres. Little attention is paid to clean drinking water facilities. 96 villages depend on well water while others have to get their supplies from the river, tanks, canals or fountains.

Communications too are poor with 40 villages having only a *kachcha* road and 19 others having slightly better roads. Only thirteen villages have got *pucca* roads and have a railway line passing near them. Out of its 39,000 hectares, over 5,000 are forest land and only about 2,500 hectares are irrigated out of 23,000 hectares of cultivable land. The area contains about 2,000 hectares of waste land and the rest is not available for cultivation.

Early in 1978, XISS took up an adult education project in 30 centres in villages near Bero, as per the guidelines of the NAEP. Other voluntary organisations were also working in the Block. *Ramakrishna Mission* was working with tribal farmers, who had been trained at Divyayan, promoting poultry. *Vikas Maitri* had opened a growth centre in the Kaksitoli-Hariharpur area south of the Block, and *Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra* of Usha Martin Co. had opened an artificial insemination centre at Bero. XISS then also launched a *community forestry* project in 9 villages, which has now spread to 20 villages. All these voluntary organisations worked in mutual understanding and in cooperation with the Block and Forest Department officials.

Of the thirty centres opened in 1978, 20 were male centres and 10 were for females. A female and a male project officer were posted at Bero. They are assisted by one female and one male local field worker working on full-time basis. When the project came to completion after 10 months, the Institute maintained contacts with the old centres and even opened thirty new

centres in contiguous villages where the people had been asking for an expansion of adult education. The full-time staff has since been reduced, and only one project officer and one full-time fieldworker are posted. This staff works in close collaboration with the field staff of the community forestry project.

THE EVALUATION WORKSHOP

The workshop was held on the ground near the bungalow of the PWD, a ramshackle building which we have used in the past for training village instructors. The participants brought some *chatais* (straw mats) and everybody including the Institute team sat on the mats in the open. The atmosphere was kept informal and unstructured to facilitate free communication.

On the first day 42 participants came, consisting of village instructors, learners, farmers and some village leaders. Only three of them were women. Their age varied from about sixteen to sixty years. Monday is the market day in Bero and the venue of the workshop was close to the market. It was, therefore, difficult to hold the attention of the participants, all of whom had also come for marketing. The workshop was supposed to start at 10.00 a.m. but did not get going till 11.30. Villagers have their own time!

The director of the Institute and the project officer briefly explained the purpose of the workshop:

(a) To evaluate what had happened with the adult education programme. What changes had taken place? How did the people see the project?

(b) What to do in the future? Even if government funds do not come forward, could we carry on the programme by our own means ?

In February 1981, a two-day evaluation workshop was organised to assess the effectiveness of the adult education programme as well as to experiment with a new methodology of evaluation. The above questions were posed to the workshop participants who were divided into three groups, each on one or two *chatais*.

In order not to influence the discussions too much, the Institute staff did not participate very actively. It took quite some time to get the discussions really going. This is a usual feature of group dynamics amongst tribal villagers. They need time to

warm up, or to unwind or unfreeze. Moreover their minds were only partly on the workshop: they were also interested in what was happening in the market. This discussion continued till about 1.30 pm, when all broke up for lunch. The workshop resumed its work at about 2.30 pm and sessions lasted till 4.00 pm only, so as to enable the participants to do their marketing.

On the second day, the number of participants was only 30, but the discussions flowed more easily, and interaction with the Institute team was more open, confident and warm.

EVALUATION BY THE PARTICIPANTS

The following are the most important points which emerged from the discussions:

A. Learners' Performance

(a) Basic literacy and numeracy had definitely been acquired by those who had gone through the programme till the end. This was also confirmed by a written test taken earlier. One of the first thrilling things they had learned was to write their own names and that of their villages. The learners now could read simple texts, notices and read or write post cards. They could calculate prices and send money orders. About two thirds of the learners had acheived these results.

(b) There had been growth in awareness of the local government's functioning and an increase in confidence in dealing with the Block administration. They also knew that when in difficulty, they could go to the project officer for assistance. It was clear that learners had learnt to seek help and make demands.

(c) Some of them had learned to keep their houses and surroundings clean, and some had made windows in their houses to assure better ventilation. This was seen as an improvement in their living arrangements.

(d) There was reduced hesitation in availing of the doctor's help, though recourse to *ojhas* and witchcraft and *jhaari butti* is still very common. Epidemics continue to kill people in large numbers due to lack of timely medical care, as it happened even last year.

(e) Some of the learners are gradually discarding the old methods of cultivation and adopting new scientific methods.

But this is happening slowly. Many people are taking to community forestry and are planting trees and bushes on their own waste land and village lands. At the same time, deforestation goes on in the reserved forests of the government.

(f) Thanks to adult education, the participants mentioned that they understood the functioning of banks and methods to get a loan. They also knew something of the procedures to obtain benefits from government schemes. In each case, however, they had experienced how difficult it was to effectively obtain such benefits, even when they knew the procedures.

(g) Some participants reported greater interaction among those who attended the AE centres, and friendships had sprung up with learners and instructors from other villages who meet on the occasion of visits to the project officer's office or training sessions. The spatial perspective of the villager is, therefore, widening as he begins to see a wider perspective.

(h) The most important achievement of the programme, in the eyes of the participants, was that the people had begun to realise the value of education and had started sending their children to school.

(i) In female centres where a sewing machine had been provided with a bank loan, the women were interested in doing their own sewing and earning something in the bargain.

B. Influence on Village Life

(a) The participants felt that caste feeling was decreasing as a result of adult education.

(b) In some villages such as Chackopi, *Gram Raksha Dals* had been started with a view to controlling petty cases of theft, to keeping a watch in the village against thefts, and to settling quarrels. These *dals* had been started at the inititative of the *mukhiya* (village head) or with his blessing. This is similar to the ancient tribal structure of youth clubs, *dumkuria*, who used to watch the village.

(c) In some villages, *Dhan Golas* (rice banks) have been started or re-started. This is another ancient custom, under which each family at the time of harvest, deposits a few *maunds* of rice, which they can claim back when they are in need. This saves them from the clutches of moneylenders. In Chackopi, the

villagers had collected 3,000 maunds in their *Dhan Gola* by January 1981.

(d) In some villages such as Jamtoli and Chackopi, people were trying to take to cooperative farming and other forms of mutual help, which were traditional structures but had been eroded due to modernisation and the spreading of cash crop farming.

C. Weakness of the Programme

The participants in the workshop also identified several aspects where the AE programme had failed to achieve any noticeable break-through.

(a) One of these is the adult education of women. Hardly any dent has been made on 90 per cent of rural women who remain illiterate in the Block. The women work the whole day in the fields or go and collect firewood from the forests. In the evening they have to prepare meals for the family. They do not have the leisure time to attend the adult education classes. A solution to this problem remained unclear.

(b) Bero is one of the areas from where thousands of young people, men and women, migrate seasonally to cities such as Calcutta, Patna or those of Punjab, as soon as the crops are harvested. This is partly due to economic distress and partly to a deep-seated desire of tribal youth to 'see the world.' They cannot resist the itch to move out along with others. Even some village instructors could not resist the temptation, and one of the participants in the workshop, a young boy of 16, had even gone to Bombay!

The young people know that such migration does not really help. They are badly treated in the cities, live in slums and can hardly save any money. The migration drains the village of its youth during many months in the year. Youth is not thereby encouraged to invest in the future of their village.

As long as employment opportunities do not multiply in the area, young people will continue to migrate. Migration is part of the vicious circle, caused by a vitiated rural-urban nexus. The adult education programme could not contribute towards any solution of this problem.

D. Future of Adult Education in Bero

The unanimous opinion was that AE should continue in Bero

Block and be extended to more villages, irrespective of whether government funds came or not. In the tribal areas, change is slow, and to expect real breakthrough in a period of ten months is unrealistic. On the contrary, by giving up so soon because of financial difficulties would mean that the little that has been achieved till now is undone and lost. AE has only started in the Bero Block.

The fact that people in neighbouring villages not yet covered by AE, are asking for centres to be opened in their *bastis* and are ready to support such centres, is a sign that the *extrinsic motivation* which could have marked the programme at the beginning (such as honorarium of Rs 50/- for village instructors) is now turning into an *intrinsic* motivation. People want AE because they see *phaida* (benefit) in it.

The participants agreed that they would carry on with adult education and post-literacy programmes on an honorary basis, provided the Institute provided the necessary back-up support such as slates, booklets, pencils, roll-up blackboards, now and then a workshop or seminar for instructors, and especially the presence of a project officer and some full-time field workers working in each *panchayat*. Most importantly, they asked the staff of the Institute to provide them with moral support and encouragement.

To take care of the expenses incurred in running the AE centres, they would utilise the traditional method of raising resources such as *Muta-sirni*, whereby in each family, before the meal is cooked, a handful of rice is put aside in a separate pot, which is taken to a common store at the end of the week or the month. This payment in kind, in however small and tiny amounts, was felt as less pinching than money contributions, and would suffice for paying small expenses on kerosene or post-literacy activities.

It was also felt that *savings clubs* should be started, as promoted by *Vikas Maitri* in the *Hariharpur Jamtoli* area where they have Rs 4,193 in cash. Those who attend AE centres would contribute every week a small amount of money, say 25 or 50 paise. They could then be entitled to borrow money from this fund, free of interest or with interest, when in need of cash. This would encourage thrift and discourage them from going to moneylenders. The money so collected could also be used for financing small economic ventures.

There were also expectations vis-a-vis the Institute: things they expect *from* us, things we have to do *for* them. The people of *Haranji* and *Pandra* wanted irrigation facilities with a pump set. Those of *Hariharpur* suggested that small units should be set up for processing of *Karanj* oil and lac, and for soap manufacturing. They felt that they themselves could handle such units. *Vikas Maitri* has in the past provided such facilities and it is therefore natural that the people expect the same from us. While such proposals fall in line with the promotion of functional literacy of the NAEP, it was explained to them that the Institute neither has the resources nor the intention to provide such facilities on its own. It will have to be seen to what extent such facilities can be extracted from the delivery system—the Block administration and the banks.

The most important form of assistance, however, that the learners and village instructors expect from the Institute is that similar workshops and seminars should be organised fairly regularly in order to review the progress of AE and its follow-up. They wanted more senior staff of the Institute, including the director, to attend such sessions (sitting with them on the same *chatai*) as it helps them to broaden their ideas and understanding of how society works, and gives them the assurance that somebody cares for them.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

The experience of the workshop generated several issues relating to the process and outcome of participatory evaluation. It was a powerful experience that created several insights among us. In the following points, some of those are described:

1. Participatory evaluation, as the one carried out in Bero, helps both the sponsoring organisation and the people to develop a deeper understanding of a programme and its impact. It becomes a process of joint conscientisation where the local people and the development workers help each other enhance their awareness of the elements that promote or hinder such programmes.

2. The adult education programme in Bero was introduced by the Institute at the behest of NAEP. To that extent, it was an externally induced programme where initially the local

people had no role in planning or implementation. However, the local community began to internalise the programme gradually and develop its 'ownership.' It is in the process of this shift that participatory evaluation played an important role. As mentioned in the evaluation, the local people had developed a commitment to the programme and were willing to carry it out on their own. In these situations where development programmes are introduced externally, which is the case in most instances, participatory evaluation can provide the impetus for increasing local control and ownership.

However, there may be several other factors that may influence the speed and extent of this shift. In this case, it was found that the tribal communities which were not greatly affected by the urbanisation process and were away from roads etc., had developed ownership and control of the programme earlier in comparison with others. This suggests that perhaps the impact of urbanisation is creating more dependence on external assistance while less affected tribal communities may be more self-reliant.

3. In a related manner, participatory evaluation can help in the process of turning the programme 'native' and striking roots in the local soil. It is perhaps because participatory evaluation provides an opportunity to link the traditional and indigenous to modern and exogenous, that programmes like the one in Bero have several elements in their design which are based on 'modern' concepts and exogenous ideas, can be effective in the long run only when these 'modern' concepts and exogenous ideas interact with traditional practices and indigenous concepts. Since participatory evaluation provides such an opportunity of interaction, it assists in the evolution of a balanced programme that is effective in the long run.

4. When an outside agency undertakes a development programme in an area, a social contract between the people of the area and the agency develops. This social contract has the elements of mutual expectation of roles and responsibilities. Many a time the social contract is unstated and implicit. Therefore, both parties develop expectations of each other which are not communicated explicitly. As a result, a mismatch of expectations is likely. In situations of mismatch of expectations between the local people and the agency, the programme is likely to

suffer. In such situations, participatory evaluation provides an opportunity for making the contract and expectations explicit and thus reducing the mismatch. For example, in this programme, the participants expected material assistance from the Institute in respect of pumps etc. It was then clarified that the Institute was not in a position to provide them with such assistance but could help them to acquire it from the delivery system.

5. The process of participatory evaluation generates a lot of qualitative data which is rich in experiences of the participants. It may be, as seen in the case, that quantitative data is sacrificed in the process. However, what is lost in statistics is more than made up by the enhanced richness of data. To the extent that the purpose of such an evaluation is to increase the quality of understanding about a programme, participatory evaluation helps that adequately.

6. An important element in effective participatory evaluation is the informality of its process. The setting, the method of obtaining data etc. are all informal as opposed to the rigid formality of traditional evaluation. In this case, the evaluation workshop was held in the open, all sat on the mats together and had lunch together. This generates informality.

7. This informality helps in opening up communication and generating rich data. As mentioned earlier, the Institute staff had made a conscious decision to facilitate interaction among the participants by maintaining an initial low profile. It helped in getting them going. It is important to keep this consideration in mind in participatory evaluation since the people always hesitate initially, especially in matters of evaluation, as they consider it the responsibility of the outsiders who are supposed to be experts.

8. The nature of participatory evaluation is such that it underscores the relevance of the concept that knowledge is power. As we have seen, the participants desired to maintain strong ties with the Institute staff. They felt that this could help them in broadening their knowledge. The need for this increased knowledge became evident to the participants when they came in contact with the larger delivery system through adult education. As they came in contact with the delivery mechanism, they began to experience inefficiency and corruption in the bureaucracy, ruthlesness of the market mechanism and other larger hurdles on their development path. Confronted with this reality,

they felt the need for more knowledge. It is this need that participatory evaluation can partly fulfil as it provides the opportunity for expanding one's horizons.

9. A related issue is the significance of interpersonal relationships in participatory evaluation. In the course of this evaluation, participants developed personal relationships with the staff of the Institute. They enjoyed these relationships and found them beneficial. Therefore, they asked for more of these sessions. It is these relationships which form the basis for mutual learning and growth and participatory evaluation can assist in building such relationships.

10. The process of participatory evaluation should be an ongoing one. In this programme, the evaluation workshop was the first such event. It should not, therefore, imply that it is at the end of a programme that such an evaluation should occur. It has been one of the weaknesses of this evaluation as it was one-shot. Perhaps the shortcomings of the programme could have been reduced if we had engaged in this evaluation on an ongoing basis.

CONCLUSION

What we have been seening above is the beginning of a process which could have been much more effective if we had introduced a participatory element from the earliest stages. Ideologically, we were clear from the beginning that though we accepted the NAEP project as the starting point, it had to become the people's programme in the fullest sense of the term. Though we worked towards this end from the beginning, it is only at the evaluation that we became aware of the real expectations of the people. Had we started this evaluatory process earlier, we would have realised that our expectations differed considerably from those of the people.

However, the NAEP was only meant to be the starting point of our involvement in the area. We have now been able to clarify our mutual expectations. Our involvement will continue but it is in a new form—neither as the people expected nor as we envisaged it originally. We are there in a completely supportive capacity and, as a result of the evaluative process, have been confirmed in our role as facilitators, with the people becoming the real change-agents.

11

External Agents as Facilitators: Participatory Process Among Tribals and in an Institution

S. Mukkath and S. de Magry

Evaluation is a word that is always received with mixed feelings--with apprehension and anxiety both by the evaluator and the evaluee, especially the latter. This state of mind often vitiates the entire exercise, resulting in a final evaluation report that to a large extent becomes unacceptable to those concerned. The evaluee often considers the exercise an unwelcome interference and not rarely feels himself under a constant threat which puts him on the defensive during the entire period. Needless to say, this distorts the true picture and much of the finer points of excellent work and contributions by the staff are lost to the evaluator. On the other hand, from the onset the evaluator is looked upon as an outsider, as someone who has come to criticise and pass judgement, a wolf in sheep's clothing, ready to rip them apart!

Much of this psychosis results from the very concept and methodology of evaluation. In the present system it is considered a scholarly exercise of experts with very little dialogue between the staff of a project and the evaluator before the commencement of evaluation. Areas for evaluation and sometimes the parameters are notified to the team of evaluators who then prepare questionnaires, check lists etc., for the assigned task.

Much of the data collection is done behind a veil of secrecy and the evaluators rarely hold an open discussion with the staff on their findings for fear of a bias creeping in.

By the end of the week of evaluation, the project staff heaves a sigh of relief at the departure of the evaluator. After this period, tension begins to mount while awaiting the much-dreaded report. When it does arrive, many critical points in the findings are unacceptable to the staff, and the recommendations considered not feasible. Much time and energy are wasted on the part of the evaluator and the evaluee on arguments—all very unfortunate and so unnecessary.

Both our institutions, Oxfam and the Indian Social Institute, which had carried out many such 'objective' studies felt dissatisfied with their outcome. These studies turned people into 'objects' of study and we felt that evaluation should be looked upon as an exercise to promote the thinking, participating and perceiving levels of a team and should be a tool for their growth as a human community. Even measuring the progress made during a set period of time towards achieving the goals, requires the active cooperation and participation of all those involved. Without the involvement of the staff at all times during this exercise, the findings are bound to become distorted and would be of no learning value to them. Hence we decided to explore other avenues. In this paper we shall share two such experiences. The first is the process that a tribal group has gone through and the second is the participative evaluation of an institution by its staff. Both these cases led to concrete action by the participants to become active agents of change.

A PROCESS OF SEARCHING AND EDUCATION

Thus started a new type of involvement, one (Selwyn) with groups and the other (Sujatha) with medical institutions. For groups, it took the form of organising study programmes based on the local situation and needs in order to initiate them into a process of education of a given live social reality of which they are a part (e.g. slums and villages). For institutions it was a process of reflecting on objectives, the present situation and its relevance to the community in order to become part of its surroundings. We were outsiders and knew that we could play only a double supportive role:

1. To help a group of activists or an institution involved in its own community to undergo a process of education on its own given situation along with its members.

2. To initiate a process of education in the community or institution in terms of their social reality and need to change it.

Through this process of participation at the level of research and study, we helped many groups and institutions to get in action at various levels. By and large these experiments were of short duration and had serious limitations as regards a given situation. This led us to ask some serious questions about the nature of our involvement. 'How does one approach the question of study and research in a given community? What is the relationship of the researcher/animator with the community? Is there a danger of his using participatory research as just one more tool for winning over the confidence of the community or institution? How does one relate to the social reality existing in a given situation, community or region? Is the researcher part of this process of struggle in finding an alternative to the existing situation or one who is academically interested in associating with the programme and people? *Who are the beneficiaries—the researcher/animator or the people*?'

Besides, the fact that the researcher/animator who, because of his social background is not familiar with the community or situation, produces obvious contradictions. Working in the field of development—on mass-based programmes—research needs to be practical and accurate, linked to an overall ideological position and should be action-oriented.

After reflection, we identified a few areas in which the external researcher has a role to play. At the ideological level one has to take into account manifestations of the macro-situation on the micro-level—the social, economic and political forces which influence the micro-situations. An overall understanding of the processes of development taking place at the macro-level is a pre-requisite to guide any research either at the participatory or non-participatory level. At the micro-level, one has to see the present level of consciousness of the people in terms of these various forces and the levels of development. If one does not perceive this situation, the study or action tend to remain isolated from the larger reality. We felt that the researcher had to help the community or institution to assess itself in terms of its own

understanding of development and how it relates to these macro-forces.

We felt that our role could not remain only at the level of ideological support but that we had to get involved at some level. The manifestation of the various forces at the micro-level in a given area would mean a familiarity and contact with the area and its situation. This level of familiarisation depends on how conscious one is of the local social reality and the need to radically transform it. We realised that given our urban background, our involvement in participatory research and the process of the growth of a community or institution depends on the extent of our commitment. Based on this reflection we arrived at the following concepts concerning Participatory Research and the process involved:

1. It is a method of social investigation involving the full and active participation of the community; it involves the powerless groups of people—the exploited and the oppressed. In the case of an institution, it involves the whole staff.

2. It is an educational process for the community or institution since they themselves try to define their problems, analyse their situation and become efficient change-agents.

3. It is a more scientific method of research, as the community itself is involved in the research process and thus tries to present itself with an analysis of its own social reality.

4. The external researcher is involved in this process of research as a committed person and as a learner, not as an outsider who tries to take an objective view of reality. He also plays the role of facilitator.

5. It is a means of taking action since this educational process creates a greater awareness in the people themselves and helps them towards a radical transformation of social reality or of the institution.

I. INVOLVEMENT WITH TRIBALS (*Selwyn Mukkath*)

Through the Indian Social Institute I came in contact with a local group of young people in a tribal district of Madhya Pradesh in 1976. This five-month involvement with this small group helped me to understand the situation of the tribals in the district more objectively. For three years after that I was in

contact with them through letters. In the meantime the group had grown in numbers and some of its animators had undergone a three-month course in community development at the ISI-Training Centre. During these years, the group expanded and got involved in many more villages.

At this stage they felt the need of a visit from an outsider and they invited me once again in 1979. From then on I have been making frequent visits and staying with them for longer periods —my involvement grew from a level of associating with them to the level of being part of the process of development of the group in its understanding of the social reality and its concrete action. In this process of involvement of the group, various inputs concerning the Indian situation had to be given in order to have a better understanding of the local situation. Various members attending training programmes organised by our Institute and other organisations in the field of development had contributed to this understanding. My role was to continue this work of facilitating the linkage of micro-situations with the macro-system.

The Need for Macro-research

This need of having an outsider arose because till then the group had been actively involved in organising people and taking up local issues and quite a substantial relationship had been built up between the people and the group of youth leaders. But the initiatives just remained at the level of organising meetings and protests on local issues and questions of development. At this stage the core group as well as the other participants felt the need of acquiring a deeper knowledge of issues connected with development. The people and the youth leaders tried to find out the major impediments to development. Slowly a need for further study and reflection to plan further action emerged as an important basis of involvement.

The group felt the need to further its understanding of the village situation for it to evolve a micro-perspective. These questions forced the group to go in for a study of the village situation in relation to the situation of the whole tribal area.

As the people started taking up issues, they could see that their action could bring other communities and villages together. This strength of unity among them further encouraged them to

ask questions related to broader issues. Why are we underdeveloped and how can we develop ourselves?

As an example we may mention a village where members of the group had been involved with taking up the issue of forest lands. Since tribal life is closely linked to the forest and alienation of forest land affected the very texture of their society, many villages rallied round the group. Instead of beginning with a protest march and preparing a charter of demands, the group brought the villagers together to reflect on their situation. The people were not yet fully conversant with all the issues connected with the alienation of tribal land and felt that a survey needed to be conducted to find out its extent and causes. In the meantime, the meetings were building up a sense of solidarity among the tribals. They were slowly going beyond their village to the tribe. Every village organised a meeting and discussed the need and involvement of the group to help in the process of education.

Methodology of Approach

At the level of methodology, we realised that if people were to be involved in this process of study, we should begin with their participation according to their present understanding of development. Then we asked ourselves how we could, as a group, through this study process, help the people to go beyond their present level of understanding of development and help them to transform their social reality.

As a first step towards this, we got involved in a process of study with the people. The first four days of our study were meant to assess the level of understanding and involvement which perpetuates their present state of dependence and inaction. We took two complementary steps for this purpose:

1. Organising meetings with the people—raising questions of underdevelopment and development etc.

2. We invited a cross section of the people for a discussion on the past and present village situation. A few farmers, a teacher, some old people, past and present leaders/*gram panchas*, literate and illiterate persons turned up for this meeting.

We recorded their views and understanding on the various aspects of development of the village situation, its struggles, its failures. its success from the viewpoint of organisation of people, people's participation, leadership pattern etc. based on a historical point of view.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

With this background information and understanding of the situation of the village, the youth leaders, along with a few other villagers who could contribute to this analysis, prepared the survey questionnaire. It took into account the literacy level of the persons who could be involved in this process of collecting information and data since it was important not to exclude anyone from the survey work. We felt that the involvement of the whole community was important if it was to become a process of education of the group. Only after the people passed through this educative process of self evaluation could we think of tabulating the data systematically. Otherwise, it could have become just one more tool of using the people as objects of study.

With this basic tool of analysis, the group went about surveying fifty nine households in the village. When they went to the village, the group was invited by the people to contribute labour in their fields as it was the transplanting season and there was a demand for more hands to work. The group split itself into two—one group working in the fields in the morning and the other in the afternoon. This involvement gave the group a larger scope to interact with the people of the village. It was obvious by now that these youth leaders had gained the confidence of the village and their contribution in the form of labour only strengthened the link.

Tabulating and Classifying Data

Since the leaders belonged to the local community, they were in a better position than any outsider to assess and review the content and value of the information provided by the households. All that we had to do was to give them an indication of the direction in which they could go and to provide them with a basis for the classification and interpretation of the data.

Tabulation and interpretation of data was a new experience to the group and the initial steps were faltering. But we knew from the beginning that if the survey had to become an educative process, it was essential for them to go through this process. Ordinarily, one is tempted to leave this work to specialists. Such an approach can continue the monopoly of knowledge by a few and turn learning into one more tool of domination. The local

people would then become dependent on the outsider instead of becoming their own change-agents.

The method we followed was to bring the local youth leaders together and discuss with them the modalities of analysing the rich data they had collected. The group of sixteen leaders decided to divide itself into four units to classify the data and later go around the households and discuss with them the information they had gathered. The final information got through this discussion was classified under the following headings :

1. On leadership pattern—past and present; people's participation.
2. Relationship with the Government, public and other agencies—past and present.
3. Relationship with other villages—past and present.
4. Relationship with those who had gone to the towns and cities for study and work.
5. Changes in the social customs and culture—a review of the present based on the past.

This was a slow process of education. Just as the professionals among us decided to share our knowledge with the youth group and enable them to tabulate and interpret the data they themselves had collected, the youth leaders on their part got the people involved in the analysis of the information at their disposal. The people slowly began to understand their own situation and see the possibility of changing it.

As a result of this process, the villagers went beyond the issue of forest land to make a study of the market economy in terms of supply and demand, pricing, extraction of surplus, etc. At present the group is preparing itself to work out a methodology to cover this aspect of the market economy in relation to the tribal economy.

In other words, beginning with the local issues the people have solwly gone beyond the village boundaries to understand the macro-structures that control their destiny and have been able to understand for themselves the forces of underdevelopment which they have been subjected to. The historical perspective was meant to enable them to understand their past in order to become conscious of their basic unity from which they have been alienated by the forces that exploit them.

Action followed this fruitful educational process and if properly guided, can lead to a radical transformation. This action

and reflection does not cease at this point of time but will lead to further study and in its turn lead to further action. Thus, a participatory research programme is a continuous process of action-reflection-action. The external agent has a catalytic role to play in this process. He has to become part of the group while bearing in mind that he cannot make himself indispensable, and has to be only a facilitator of change.

II. EVALUATION OF AN INSTITUTION (*Sujatha de Magry*)

This concerns the evaluation of a medical institution in Andhra Pradesh. This evaluation, though done in a hospital, was supposed to study the possibilities only of the re-orientation of the community health programme. Hence we shall ignore the hospital and study only the evaluation of the community health programme by the hospital staff.

The entire medical programme of this institution had been structured on more or less conventional lines of a hospital-based community health project. However, some changes had been introduced over the years. In the outreach clinics, the nurses had taken over the doctor's services such as diagnosis, prescription and treating of patients. A second break in the conventional system was the training of village health workers and the formation of village health committees. The medical programme itself seemed to be popular in the project villages but there seemed to be very little change in the villages and the little that existed did not seem to be proportionate to the number of years of involvement and effort. Hence I was asked to help the hospital in its evaluation.

Professionally speaking, the project is well staffed. It has got a staff of 25 in the hospital including doctors, nurses, ANMs, leprosy paramedical workers, driver, secretarial staff, social workers and an agriculturist. Besides, there were 16 village health workers. We decided to begin with the involvement only of the hospital staff in the evaluation. It was hoped that after passing through a one week process of self-evaluation, they would later continue the process in the villages through the village health workers. The latter part is a long process and will not be discussed here.

As a first step, the staff decided to suspend all afternoon

visits to the villages and cancel the general clinics for a week. Only emergencies would be attended to. The staff felt that this evaluation should also be considered a training programme and as such it was essential to take a distance from their day to day activities.

Much of the first afternoon was spent in recapitulating the work of the past one year. The reason for choosing this period was that there had not been any staff changes during these twelve months and everyone could be considered responsible for what had been achieved or left undone during that period. For this part of the evaluation, the staff was divided into five groups of five each. Four of these groups were led by staff nurses and the fifth by the present director who had taken over six months earlier.

The first step in this recapitulation was tabulating information on various aspects of the programme. Every group was asked to write out what they knew about the programme. If the participants were to take action for the future, it was essential for them to know the present state of their programme. The following two tables give some of the findings of the groups.

Question 1: Give the present number in the whole project for each of these categories :

Group No.	Village clinics	Villages visited	Beedi factories	Panchayats in the project	VHWs trained
Group I	9	20	20	10	12
Group II	9	24	—	—	12
Group III	9	23	81	14	12
Group IV	9	24	52	10	11
Group V	(no answer)		—	—	—

Question 2: Each group was asked to give from one village each the present nutritional status of children born in that village during eleven months of 1978-79.

Other questions concerned the present state of immunisation of children under two and the health status of under-fives. All the answers showed a similar trend. The first factor that emerged

No.	Village	Total	R.H.	I	II	III	Not available
Group I	A	124	8	20	12	9	75
Group II	B	178	19	21	17	11	110
Group III	C	101	9	10	13	5	64
Group IV	D	83	3	9	9	6	56
Group V	E	122	4	9	13	4	92
		608	43	69	64	42	297

was that the project staff was not fully aware of the work of the programme. Except for the number of villages, there was great difference in the figures presented by the groups. If the whole staff has to participate in the decision-making process, then they have to know the basic facts about the programme. They became aware that none of them knew enough and thus a need was created to have essential information.

Through this process the staff also became conscious of its negligence in maintaining records that are essential for sustained follow-up of the health status of children. They also became aware of other shortcomings such as lack of attention paid to the under-fives, the failure of the VHWs to weigh the under-fives regularly and neglect of mothers' nutritional education during the weaning period. This awareness was created in a non-threatening atmosphere because all were equally responsible for the situation and they had reached these conclusions through a process of self-evaluation.

If an outsider had come as an evaluator to write an 'objective' report, the staff would have spent most of its time defending their actions. In this non-threatening atmosphere they became aware of the situation and went on to search for causes of minor ailments of children since they felt that they had to know the reasons before correcting their course. Not all groups could identify all the symptoms. One group had not recorded any symptoms while two others recorded only one each—malnutrition or scabies. A similar discrepancy was noticeable in the discussion on the obstacles to the treatment of under-fives. But what mattered was the creation of a non-threatening atmosphere.

Likewise all areas of priority in medical care were covered—

anti-natals, family planning, T.B., leprosy etc. The groups then went on to reflect on other aspects such as contacts with the government-run institutions, local resources and funds available through the government etc. Lastly, a brief write-up by each team on how the work had changed over the years with regard to home visits, village visits, treatment, teaching and enrolling new centres ended the day's discussion. This gave the newer staff more than a glimpse into the past and helped them to know more about the project.

As each priority was identified, the groups met for general discussion and tabulated their findings. By the end of the afternoon the staff felt that they had really achieved something by looking at their records meaningfully, and a couple of them went to the extent of saying 'we now realise why it is important to maintain regular reports and records.' Till then, record-keeping was only a duty whose meaning they did not clearly understand. As such, many of them did not take it seriously. Now they realised that it had a human face—that it was part of their responsibility towards the children who would be deprived of their human right to health if they did not follow them up methodically.

Once the medical priorities were fixed and the human face of their work seen, the staff then went on to ask other questions concerning the improvement of medical facilities and the final question for the day was: 'What other four areas besides medical care need improvement if the health status of the communities is to improve?'

Group I : Health education, planning sanitation, kitchen garden and adult education, *mahila mandals* and socio-economic development.

Group II Environmental hygiene, socio-economic development, health education, VHWs, formation of cooperatives, *balwadis* and *mahila mandals.*

Group III Cottage industries, kitchen graden and education.

Group IV Adult education, safe drinking water, sanitation.

Group V Nil.

The staff then went on to discuss the problems which, they felt, prevented the community health programme from functioning more effectively and efficiently. After the tabulation of

the findings and discussion, several suggestions were made for improvement which were later incorporated into the short and long-term plans.

It should be clear by now that the discussion on the first day was exploratory and was only meant to create an atmosphere of openness. Discussion was limited to action in the field and no one felt seriously threatened by the evaluation. Once such an atmosphere was created, the staff could go on to the most important question of the very objectives of the programme. This is basic to any action that has to follow an evaluation if it is not to remain a purely academic exercise.

Besides, one could see by now that there was a block in at least one group i.e. No. V. They could not answer a single question. This was obviously not because all its members were ignorant but because there was a different type of interaction in this group. Hence it was found necessary to change the groups. So on the second day the staff were divided into three groups and they discussed at length questions relating to the objectives, plans, problems and possible solutions.

—What is the community health project trying to achieve through its programme?
—How far has this been achieved?
—What needs to be done?
—What problems do you envisage while trying to achieve it?
—What can be done to prevent some of these problems?

As on the previous day, before the groups broke up, all met together to share their thoughts and ideas. As the day ended in a friendly atmosphere, all the staff looked visibly relaxed at being able to look at the problems and discuss them openly.

On the third day the same three groups continued to work together by looking at their job descriptions and seeing whether they required to be changed or not, taking into consideration what had been discussed during the previous days. This was a rather difficult situation, since a lot of negative feelings had been bottled up and this exercise gave each of those who had a chip on their shoulder to air their woes and perhaps get rid of the chip or reduce its size!

On the fourth day the three groups met together to discuss the recommendations that were being made for changes in the

job descriptions. This particular exercise can become problematic, hence it is absolutely necessary that the person leading the discussions be completely aware of the situation and the implications of changes made in the job descriptions. For this purpose, it was considered wise to involve other senior personnel of the institution though this was considered only a departmental issue.

The whole of the 5th day was spent in drawing up a short-term plan for the next twelve months and a long-term plan for the next three years. The staff met in three groups and later came together for general discussions and formulated their plans. By the end of the week each member of the staff within the department was able to understand his functions better, and more important, what all of them were trying to achieve together. As a result of this exercise, when the programme had its first external evaluation, they were better prepared and understood its need without feeling threatened. They were able to continue this process with the village health workers and one hopes that all the villagers will be involved in it.

CONCLUSION

We have seen two cases in which an external agent, member of a national or international organisation, functioned as a catalyst for change in a group of tribal villages or in an institution. This is a new role and needs to be studied further. Knowledge has often been used as a tool of domination and the secrecy surrounding many evaluations has, far from becoming a change agent, often put the 'evaluees' on the defensive. Given the threatening atmosphere, one is not certain that the evaluator can get real information about the people and their work. The evaluees, used as objects of study, tend to give only information which they consider non-threatening. In fact, cases are not lacking where some villages have been studied so often by outside researchers that some villagers have become experts at answering questions and give the investigators the type of answers they want.[1]

[1]Mahmood Mamdani, *The Myth of Population Control: Family, Caste and Class in an Indian Village* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 18-19.

On the other hand, because of lack of involvement of the evaluees, the people only become 'objects' of study. The researcher himself may have the good will of studying a situation in order to initiate action. But lack of people's participation can lead to what an author has called 'paper reforms'[2] though the scholar himself may be under the impression that major changes have been brought about. A greater danger is that of some universities in the developed countries using the local scientists and researchers to do the type of studies which they themselves are unable to do. Both the scholars in the rich countries and the scientists in the poor nations may view it only as a professional exercise. But without their realising it, their findings may be used by the multinational or local decision-makers to improve their modes of penetration of the local market or exploitation of cheap labour. Thus, research by an outsider can become one more tool of colonialism.[3]

As these case studies have shown, participatory research and evaluation assign a new role to the outside scholar. In the first place, research itself becomes a tool for action, not in the colonial sense as mentioned above, but as a process through which the people grow in the awareness of their situation and work for the acquisition of their rights.

> In view of this, the agency and its workers see their role as one of making the people aware of the realities of the situations in which they exist and of themselves in their situations. They are to enable the people to reflect on their needs and their problems and to articulate their own solutions. Finally they will help them to organise themselves to achieve their own goals and objectives of self-determination.[4]

[1]Bunker Roy, 'Paper Reforms,' *Seminar* No. 257 (Annual Number: January, 1981), pp. 52-54

[2]Zafarullah Chowdhury, 'Research—A Method of Colonization,' in Rajesh Tandon (ed.), *Participatory Research in Asia* (Canberra: Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, 1980), pp. 16-25.

[4]Desmond A. D'Abreo, 'Non-Formal Education for Awareness Building,' in Walter Fernandes (ed.), *People's Participation in Development—Approaches to Non-Formal Education* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1980), p. 16.

If this is to happen, then the scholar cannot remain any more an outside 'objective' researcher but has to become part of the process. While getting involved in the process, he can never afford to forget that he is an outsider, as such he is to play only a supportive role. This is a difficult position but it is important to bear this double identity in mind if the people are to grow as a community and not become dependent on the facilitator.

Conclusion

Statement of the Workshop on Participatory Evaluation

1. A workshop on participatory evaluation was held at XISS, Ranchi, March 9-12, 1981. The participants felt the need of such a seminar for most research tends to be academic and does not help the oppressed sections of society to change the systems that keep them down. Knowledge tends to become an additional tool of domination. The participants at this workshop feel the need of turning research into a tool in the hands of the people to acquire for themselves the rights and resources that they have been deprived of in the present society.

2. The participants described participatory evaluation as a process in which a catalyst, who may or may not be an outsider with outside inputs, enables the people as the main agents to collectively search for knowledge which will lead them to action. Some of the specific characteristics of participatory evaluation enumerated by the participants were the following :

—It is an ongoing process as opposed to an end product of a report for the purpose of changing funding structures;
—It implies that the qualitative information is more important than hard statistical data;
—It cannot be effected unless there is prior participation by the people in planning and initiating action;

—Any entry point can lead to people's organisation if participatory evaluation forms part of the process;
—It must help to evaluate the objectives themselves in the context of the present situation. At this stage, participatory research comes in to discover new objectives and criteria.

3. The workshop was an interaction between persons involved in action in the field, in training and in macro-research. The participants felt that this interaction was a positive experience and was beneficial to all concerned. But if it has to become a tool for people's organisation, this requires that those who want to work with the people should be prepared to identify themselves with the interests of the have-nots, get away from the tendency to keep control of knowledge to themselves, and become part of a learning, education and action process of the marginalised sections of society.

4. This is particularly important because unlike in the natural sciences, in social research one is dealing with people with changing social relations and cultural patterns. Hence one cannot afford to be dogmatic about the methods but should keep oneself open to the people. This openness comes out of trust in people and a realisation that the oppressed are capable of understanding their situation, searching for alternatives and taking their own decisions.

5. Though a network of participatory research is already functioning, the participants realised during this workshop that many more groups at the grass roots level are involved in the process of participatory evaluation and training though they may not know the terminology.

6. These local efforts at participatory evaluation and research need to be subsumed by the macro-level researchers who will translate them into the language of those who today justify anti-people policies through their superior knowledge. This communication in the language which policy-makers accept will pressurise them in some way to change the policies which marginalise the weaker sections in the name of development. The end product of this macro-level research needs to be re-translated into the language of the people sc that it forms a basis for the reflection and action of the oppressed sections.

7. The participants realise that participatory evaluation is only

part of the process through which the exploited grow into free persons. Groups involved either in economic development, in education or in political action at times tend to be paternalistic and impose their own technology and ideology on the people. The participants at this workshop feel that such an attitude tends to make people dependent on the external group instead of enabling them to become aware of their own situation in the context of the larger realities of society.

8. This requires that outsiders go not as persons who have answers but as learners. The starting point should be humility, honesty and openness in our participation and a recognition of the failure of solutions that did not take the cultural patterns and social relations of the people into consideration and did not make people part of the decision-making process. What has succeeded in one area within a given historical situation cannot be absolutised for all times and places. The local situation, culture and other aspects need to be taken into account.

9. If research and evaluation have to be part of a liberative process, it is essential that women be involved in the search for knowledge and the decision-making process from the earliest stages. The liberation of men from economic oppression without change in the social relations between sexes can further marginalise women in our society.

10. People need to be trained for participatory research and evaluation but the best way of training them is by the catalysts getting involved in the people's search for an identity and alternatives to the present system. As a help to this training, it was suggested that some experiences in participatory evaluation and training be published both in English and the regional languages.

11. The participants of this workshop feel the need of spelling out for themselves in what way participatory research and evaluation can be deepened in their fields. This requires constant interaction between groups working in the field among themselves and with macro-organisations in order to share their experiences, learn from others and support one another. Hence the participants at this workshop decide that all of them will make a definite effort to create these linkages both at the micro and the macro-levels.

12. Such workshops, if held in project areas, will be more useful. Others will be able to witness how participatory evaluation is actually going on in that area.

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Index

Action, 25, 26, 45, 70, 82, 90, 91, 200, 201; combined, 32, 100, 187; cultural, 88, 90, 91; genuine 11; goal-directed, 9, 167; innovative, 36, 168, 187, 197; methodology of, 8, 71; participatory, 5, 8-11, 29, 96, 108; process, 12, 95, 166, 191, 200; social, 1, 3-5, 8-10, 26, 28, 29, 31, 57-59, 91; top-down, 4, 10; voluntary, 24, 26, 36, 117; *See Evaluation, Research*

Agency, 90, 93, 151; external 162, 171, 180; funding, 38, 40, 42, 47, 129; government, 44, 110, 190; implementing, 93, 94; international, 4; voluntary, 36, 37, 40, 51, 62, 73, 75, 78, 88

Agent, active, 36; catalytic, 43, 53, 77, 82, 171, 191; of change, 12, 31, 71, 107, 148, 149. 186, 196; external, 6, 8; *See People*

Alienate, 23, 36, 91

Alienation, 29

Anthropological, 84

Anthropologist, 15, 17, 71, 151

Anthropology, 9, 17

Aware, 36, 44, 47, 51, 57, 58, 71, 97, 101, 102, 122, 134, 164, 165, 193

Awareness, 47, 51, 63, 84, 91, 101, 113, 166; building, 21, 45, 47, 62, 95, 105, 106; critical, 95, 105, 106; enhance (grow in), 175, 179, 186; as outcome, 9, 175; process of,45, 136, 140, 165; of situation, 37, 113, 183, 197; *See Rights*

Caste, 63, 91, 128, 133, 196; backward, 128; feeling of, 176; high, 57, 58, 145, landholding, 2; low, 44, 57, 58, 142; scheduled, 9, 70, 72, 139, 142, 146, 147, 150, 172; system, 142; upper, 43, 68, 70, 142, 145; *See Women*

Catalyse, 47, 62

Catalyst, 7, 11, 59, 147, 196, 199, 201

Class, 29, 91; bias, 142; conflict, 118; middle, 45-47; underprivileged, 36, 37; upper, 47

Colonial, 17, 20, 50, 116, 197

Colony, 17, 18

Communal, 43, 59, 63

Communication, 6,. 85, 87-89, 91, 92, 200; downward, 93; liberative, 83, 89-92; modes (forms) of, 6, 8, 9, 85, 86, 89, 90, 92, 103, 135; participative, 86, 181; role of 85; system, 6, 88, 173; tools of, 132, 133

Community, 43, 66, 68, 71, 72, 87, 105, 130, 143; building, 43, 170; growth of, 142, 148, 169, 184, 186, 198; homogeneous, 68-70; intellectual, 83; local 76, 77, 105, 114, 115, 127, 180, 184, 185, 189; members of, 131, 134; participation, 129, 130, 189; of poor

(oppressed), 95, 96, 100, 101; traditional, 85, 115, 116; worker, 76; *See Health, Oppressed, Tribal, Village*
Conscientisation, 90, 91, 137, 179
Consciousness, 24, 171, 185
Cooperation, 99, 149; of local agencies, 43, 51, 55, 173; of people, 42, 147, 165, 184
Cooperative, 43, 73, 78, 79, 147; agricultural, 39, 149; bank, 73, 74, 145; fishermen's, 43, 49, 52; formation of, 194; labour, 141
Cultural, 10, 104, 112, 117; bias, 84; distance (gap), 88, 133; pattern, 200, 201; practices, 116; resources, 120; situation, 18, 117; *See Action*
Culture, 6, 88, 111, 113, 116, 117, 190; expressions of, 63; indigenous (local), 89, 133, 134, 201; of silence, 90, 143, 164

Dependent, 35, 43, 54-56, 75, 82, 83
Development, 1, 6, 13, 20, 24-26, 35, 47, 50, 54, 70, 74, 76, 82, 99-106, 108, 114, 116, 120, 121, 132, 158; activity, 37, 102; agency, 73, 96,; agricultural, 39, 46, 49, 51; alternative, 3, 5, 25, 33, 62, 113, 121, 122, 200; approach, 37, 43-45, 54, 55, 60, 63, 73, 95, 102, 104, 105, 107; benefits, 36, 40, 41; community, 28, 29, 38, 40, 42, 57, 59, 60, 75, 78, 94, 95, 167, 187; decentralised, 27, 42, 43, 54, 60; and delivery system, 2; dynamics, 27; economic, 45, 47, 194, 201; effort, 2, 33, 47, 67, 73; elitist, 2; human, 11, 36, 52, 60, 166, 170; impact, 37, 40, 42, 48, 52, 53, 55, 60, 62; infrastructure, 2, 35, 43, 59, 62; integrated, 11, 147; metropolitan, 2; models (patterns) of, 7, 27, 36, 51, 62, 73, 110; participative, 35; and people, 27, 96, 111, 112; planned, 2, 25, 35, 47, 109, 121; problems, 7; process of 48, 93, 94, 107, 112, 185, 187; projects (programmes, schemes), 4, 6, 7, 27, 35, 37, 38, 40, 42, 46, 47, 51, 55, 63, 65, 66, 68, 69, 73, 93, 104, 117, 119, 127, 162, 164 168, 170, 180; rural, 11, 17, 19 32, 36, 39, 46, 49, 51, 56, 57, 75 162, 167; strategy, 4, 27, 37, 52-57, 62, 65, 105, 112, 113, 115 121, 122; understanding of, 26, urban, 27, 28, 78; vision 60, 95, 98, 102, 104, 107; worker, 3, 27, 44, 46, 65, 73, 94, 96, 100, 179; *See Resources*
Dominant, 35, 36, 44, 58, 112, 122
Domination, 68, 146, 190
Durkheim, Emile, 17

Economic, 18, 19, 62, 100, 114, 120, 144, 177, 185; approach, 44; base, 36; benefits, 51, 54; component, 37, 53; content, 45, 48, 52, 56, 57, 79; growth, 36, 60, 82, 105 122; inputs, 36, 37, 40, 46; oppression, 201; orientation, 42, 55; programme (project), 43, 45, 51, 69, 77, 79, 105, 149; situation, 164, 170; support, 37, 56, 149; system, 36, 103, 104; upliftment, 42; viability, 48; *See Development*
Economy, 2, 27, 116, 117, 168, 190; *See Tribal*
Education, 9, 27, 36, 58, 96, 102; adult, 88, 162-164, 172-174, 176, 179, 193, 194; for change, 45, 94, 105; formal, 71, 98; methodology of, 106; non-formal, 32, 38-40, 44, 51-53, 57, 59, 133, 163; of people, 10, 48, 49, 56; political, 27, 56; process (educative), 37, 44, 45, 48-51, 61, 97, 98, 107, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191; role of, 37 *See Health, Women*
Educational, 27, 49, 62, 64, 88; aspect, 32, 52; content 45, 52, 57; inputs, 35, 40, 48; outcome, 9, 48,; pro-

cess, 37, 45, 52, 100, 106, 186; programme, 97, 105, 106
Entry (starting) point, 38, 42, 44, 45, 47, 52, 62, 66, 97, 99, 182, 200, 201
Evaluate, 37, 79, 100, 104
Evaluation, 2, 19, 22, 24, 48, 67, 93, 102, 106, 113, 138, 139, 195; approach, 41, 82,; client, 22; critical, 118; design, 22; external, 41, 70, 196; methodology of, 8, 11, 22, 41, 68, 70, 82, 174, 183; object of, 93, 98; objective, 65, 66, 68, 99, 107; outcome, 22; participatory, 3, 12, 15, 20, 22, 23, 28, 29, 31, 34, 41, 66, 68-73, 82, 91, 93-95, 99-101, 107, 108, 127, 151, 167, 169, 179-182, 184, 197, 199; process of, 27, 29, 41, 68, 107, 127, 182, 199; questionnaire, 41; report, 183; self, 68, 189, 191, 193; as specialisation, 65; system, 2; traditional, 65, 68, 181
Evaluative, 41, 48, 182
Evaluator, 2, 41, 42, 66, 68, 106, 184, 196; external, 68, 72, 108, 183, 193; facilitator, 68, 71, 98
Evolution, 17, 37, 47, 83
Evolutionary; 15, 84, 91
Exploit, 43, 63, 68, 191
Exploitation, 30, 89, 105, 116, 117, 123, 166, 197
Exploited, 122, 140, 150, 163, 165, 186, 201
Exploiter, 60, 68, 70, 164

Farmer, 4, 27; big, 39; marginal, 29, 30, 39; medium, 39; small, 30, 38, 39, 46, *See Tribal*
Fishermen, 39, 43-46, 49, 51, 52, 55, 57, 59, 60, 122; *See Cooperative*
Freire, Paulo, 11, 25, 70, 90

Green Revolution, 4, 5

Health, 49, 51, 77, 130, 134, 136, 137, 163, 194; alternative, 29, 135, 147; awareness, 136, 138, 139; care, 10, 29, 38, 74, 129, 132, 147; centre, 38, 173; child, 77, 80; community, 191, 195; curative, 38, 40, 47; department, 75, 76, 134; education, 78, 129, 134, 136, 139, 142, 194; facilities, 147, 173; institutional, 40; maternal, 80; poor, 47; preventive, 74; project (programme), 40, 46-48, 51, 55, 57, 60, 127, 129, 130, 134, 138, 191; situation (status), 29, 138, 139, 143, 163, 193, 194; system, 29, 147; worker (CHW), 74, 129-131, 134, 137, 139, 140, 142, 145, 148, 191-193, 196

Ideological, 21, 56, 69; stance (stand), 24-26, 33, 185; support, 60, 61, 186
Ideology, 69, 72, 73, 82, 95, 104, 182, 201
Inequality, 2, 5, 6, 35, 36, 68, 102, 110, 128
Injustice, 36, 63, 164
Inputs, 7, 35; agricultural, 46; external, 5-7, 75, internal, 5; impact of, 37; *See Development, Economic, Educational, Organisational, Technical, Training*

Knowledge, 23, 60, 82, 84, 96, 131, 164, 196; centuries-old, 8, 114; control over, 20, 21, 200; development of, 20, 30, 187; expert, 116, 118, 119; formal, 114; generation of, 20, 21, 32, 89, 97, 123; genuine, 8, 97; increased, 31, 32, 181, 182; local, 8, 119; macro, 10, 120, 123; monopoly of, 12, 20, 23, 31, 56, 122, 136, 181, 190; new, 16, 50; people's, 8, 10, 23, 114, 119, 149; process, 21, 32; professional, 32, 149, 190; sources of, 21, 114, 120, superior, 72, 83, 200; system of, 32, 110, 112, 113, 116, 118, 122; utilisation (use) of, 16, 18, 20, 21, 32

Labourer, 140; agricultural, 29, 142, 149, 173; landless, 4, 23, 29, 30, 46, 142, 146
Liberation, 105, 122, 201; elements of, 58; process of, 3, 9, 11, 29, 82; stages of, 25

Marginal, 36, 112
Marginalisation, 45, 113-115
Marginalise, 36, 72, 115, 117, 122, 200
Marx, Karl, 17
Modernsation, 8, 90, 109, 110, 112, 114, 177
Modernise, 19, 58, 92
Moneylender, 43, 60, 74, 78, 176
Multinational, 1, 2, 197

Oppressed, 21, 25, 26, 68, 95, 99, 104, 166, 200; community of, 100, 101; groups, 70, 91, 92, 186; sections, 27, 199
Oppression, 92, 104, 105, 107, 143, 147, 164, 201
Oppressive, 36, 90, 102, 104
Organisation, 23, 46, 48, 95, 107, 130, 157, 179, 201; building, 30, 107; effort of, 30, 168; external, 94, 187; funding, 37, 52; genuine, 30; national, 59, 60, 196; process of, 30; religious, 37, 57, 58, 60; students, 57, 58; viable, 6, 51, 167; voluntary, 35, 36, 47, 50, 53 61-64, 80, 134, 170, 173; *See Farmer, People, Slum, Women*
Organisational, 36, 48, 51, 167; content, 49, 51, 53; continuity, 43, 49; linkage, 58, 59; marginality, 60, 61; support, 35, 60
Organise, 38, 40, 44, 46, 49, 56, 75, 79, 90, 134, 141, 179 *See People*
Organiser, 54, 74, 90
Outcome, 9, 100, 112; human, 10; qualitative, 9, 10, 121; quantitative, 9, 18, valued, 26 *See Evaluation, Research*

Participant, 27, 41, 46, 47, 51, 52, 61, 79, 96, 98-103, 105-107, 131, 132, 134, 151, 162, 184; in action, 9; in education, 178, 180, 181, 187, 192; in evaluation, 26; of workshop, 174-177, 199-201
Participation, 9, 26, 27, 35, 47, 49, 53, 56, 81, 85, 90, 92, 103, 122, 132; active, 49, 132, 184, 186; attitude of, 33, 99, 137, 169; effective, 44, 47, 127; fear of, 33; low, 57; nature of, 35, 37; process of, 185; and productivity, 57; *See People, Training*
People, 2, 3, 6, 12, 23, 26, 27, 29, 44, 50, 55, 56, 70, 84, 91; actors, 15, 20-23, 25, 26, 82; agents, 5, 6, 12, 31, 61, 93, 108, 168, 170, 182, 190, 199; anti-people, 8, 200; as beneficiaries (recipients), 5, 8, 43, 45, 54, 55, 62, 148, 162, 169, 170; decision-makers, 3, 12, 29, 32, 54, 60, 147, 148, 169, 201; faith (trust) in 3, 7, 54, 90, 96, 147, 148, 169, 200; growth of, 6, 7, 62, 166; ignorant 53, 89, 114, 120; involvement of, 6, 12, 30, 37-43, 46, 49, 53, 54, 62, 68, 75, 107, 114, 129, 130, 137; local, 5, 11, 24, 43, 49, 82, 105, 106, 117, 119, 120, 179, 180, 190, movements, 8, 24, 118, 119, 123, 147; needs of, 36; ordinary (common), 7, 23, 24, 26, 28; organise, 38, 40, 46, 90, 94, 105, 167, 187, 197; organisation of, 9, 24, 89, 188, 200; programmes (projects) of, 60; participation of, 3, 5, 6, 9, 26, 33, 35, 37, 42, 43, 45-48, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59-62, 75, 91, 92, 112, 113, 118, 121, 133, 188, 189, 197; rights of, 22; self-confidence, 6, 9, 29, 32, 63, 89; struggle, 33, 99, 118, 122, 123, *See Knowledge*
Political, 18, 28, 30, 32, 33, 50, 66, 90, 91, 106, 114, 116, 118, 185; decision, 36; dynamics, 29, 147, 164; interests, 63; implications,

28, 29, 33, neutral, 28, 110, process, 29, 33, 82, 171; structure, 49, 117; system, 79, 119; *See Education*
Poor, 25, 27, 44, 50, 54, 68, 95, 100, 101, 104, 117; countries (nations), 7, 28, 30, 35, 197; rural, 3, 29, 115; urban, 2, 30, 80
Popular, 6,8, 21, 70, 121-123
Population, 7, 10, 27, 32, 33, 48, 52, 61, 106, 130, 147; local, 106, 114, 116, 117, 129, 172, *See Rural*
Poverty, 30, 35, 36, 44, 46, 111, 114
Power, 52, 58, 82, 117, 118, 144, 170; concentration, 4; control, 4-7, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 33; collective, 5; decision-making, 31, 127, 142; differentials, 5, 29; distribution, 3-5, 9; electric, 119-121; horizontal, 11; monopoly of, 27, 169; source of, 5, 7, 123; structure, 1, 7, 19, 44, 58, 66
Powerful, 24, 25, 30, 84, 109, 113, 115
Powerless (less powerful), 24, 33, 186
Production, 50, 63, 103, 114
Professional, 33, 54, 113, 115, 116, 123, 142, 144, 149, 197; approach, 33; language, 10, 123; medical, 131, 143, 145, 149; researcher, 20-22, 24, 26, 28, 32; *See knowledge*
Professionalisation, 15, 21, 136
Professionalism, 19, 20

Relationship, 91, 101, 106; dialogical, 94, 98; dichotomous, 2; dominance-dependency, 2, 5-7, 188; of domination, 7, 68; of equality, 106; interpersonal 182; of subordination, 2; unequal, 2, 6
Relief, 36, 74
Replicability, 51, 52, 73
Replicable, 62, 73
Replicate, 52, 84, 110
Research, 1-3, 5, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, 32, 35, 66-68, 70; academic, 20, 21, 113, 199; approach, 20, 21, 23-25; classical, 15, 18-21, 28, 30-32; design, 16, 21, 22, 25; experience 6; external, 5, 7; institute, 4, 21, 27; macro, 8, 10, 11, 31, 72, 187, 200; method(ology), 3, 4, 7, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 30, 31, 37; models, 7, 15-17, 20, 21, 32; objective; 1-3, 5, 12, 17, 20, 28; outcome, 3, 4, 9, 10, 21, 31, 32, 121; participatory 5, 8, 10-12, 15, 20-28, 30, 31, 33, 72, 91, 97, 113, 117-123, 185, 191, 197, 200; problem, 21-23, 25-27; process, 9, 11, 12, 19, 22, 23, 25, 30, 31, 33, 186; programme (project), 6, 33, 191; purpose of, 16; relevant, 31; researcher (worker), 2-4, 8, 10-12; 16, 19-29, 31-33, 72, 113, 114, 117-121, 185, 186, 197, 198; scholar, 2, 5, 8, 28, 194, 197, 198; social, 1, 4, 5, 10, 11, 16, 18-20, 27, 28, 113, 200; subject, 4, 19, 21; system, 2, 3, 14, 28, 31-33, 113, 114; top-down, 2, 4, 10; traditional, 1, 3-5, 7, 9, 10, 28, validity of 30, 31; value-free (neutral), 1, 19, 20, 28
Resources, 2, 3, 5, 8, 93, 94, 105, 110, 111, 116, 117, 123, 135, 199; base, 14, 112, 115; capital, 5. 112; conservation of, 5, 50; critical, 3, 5, 6, 12; distribution of, 5; destruction of, 115, 116, 120, 122; development of, 2, 115; existing, 63, 112; expertise, 5, 6; external, 4-7, 48; financial, 5, 9, 63, 112; internal, 5, 137; local, 6, 7, 9, 53, 63, 117, 120, 122, 194; mobilisation 5, 2, 111; natural, 112, 120-122; personnel, 5, 6, 93, 96; social, 120, 122; utilisation of, 118; *See Power*
Rich, countries, 4, 7, 26, 27, 30; urban, 115
Rights, 5, 63; acquisition of, 37, 56, 197, 199; awareness of, 57, 58, 63; deprival of, 135, 136, 147, 165,

199; human, 194; of marginalised, 36
Rural, 2, 27, 29, 88, 90, 121, 147; areas, 92, 110, 128; households, 122, 128; housing, 116, 117; population (people), 83, 105, 110, 114-117, 132

Science, 15, 110, 120, 121; natural, 5, 16-19, 83, 113, 200 social, 7, 15-20, 26-28, 83, 85, 113
Scientific, 15, 99, 116, 120, 175
Slum, 40, 43, 74, 78, 80, 81, 177, 184, dweller, 30, 38, 43, 46, 51, 61, 81, 105; housing, 45, 46, 51; organisation, 38, 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 59, 61, 81; rebuilding, 39, 45, 48-53, 57
Social, 50, 84, 85, 90, 100, 110, 114, 116, 180; analysis, 29, 32, 106, 120; capital, 10; change, 16, 18, 19, 32, 33, 108, 136, 139, 141, 147; control, 19, 21, 27, 31, 33, 85; dynamics, 147, 164; housing, 53; inequality, 110; institution, 78; inquiry, 15, 16, 18, 33, 186; justice, 7; order, 14, 16; organisation, 108, 111; position, 29; process, 31, 82; progress, 83; reality, 30, 32, 84, 184-188; relations, 85, 200, 201; scientist, 15, 17; setting, 16, 21, 24, 28, 30-33; situation, 29; status, 143-145, 149; structure, 19, 29, 36, 61, 85; system, 19, 43, 99, 103, 104, 113, 147; technologist, 16; thinkers, 17; transformation, 27, 28; worker, 43, 129, 143, 144, 149, 191; *See Action, Evaluation, Research Science*
Society, 3, 23, 27, 30, 59, 66, 83, 91, 103, 104, 111, 114, 119, 179; change of, 50, 99, 165; dominant sections of, 113, 147; just, 110; marginalised, 34, 200; primitive, 17, 84; unjust, 33, 36; restructuring, 101, 102, 104, 107, 138; weaker sections of, 35-37, 40, 44, 47, 48, 50, 52, 60, 68, 72, 147, 199, 200; *See Village*
Sociologist, 17, 18, 71
Sociology, 15, 17, 23
Sponsor, 35, 41-47, 49-51, 54, 55, 57, 59-62

Technical, 46, 48, 60, 65, 111; competence, 55, 56; component, 53, 64; efficiency, 54-56, 62; expertise, 55; innovation, 56; inputs, 35-37, 40, 43, 49, 50, 53, 56; scheme, 40, 44; *See Training*
Technological, 50, 53, 84, 110, 115, 117
Technology (techniques), 4, 6, 7, 26, 43, 50, 65, 69, 71-73, 82, 111, 116, 201; advanced, 7, 56; appropriate, 74, 110, 137; assessment, 109, 113, 118, 122, efficient, 7, 115; intermediate, 50; imported, 88; local, 8, 10. 12; modern, 7, 8, 10, 109-112, 115; productive, 36, 115; relevant, 9; sophisticated, 7, 40, 49, 111, 114; traditional, 50, 56, 114, 115; transfer of, 109
Third World, 3, 7, 11, 18, 27, 28, 30
Training, 6-9, 53, 80. 94-96, 99, 113, 127, 140, 174, 200; agricultural, 42; centre, 96, 105, 134, 187; component, 53, 62; content, 96; course, 80, 81; inputs, 101, 107; intensive, 102; method(ology) 8, 26, 96, 98-100, 105, 108; participation in, 9, 86, 97, 131, 200; programme, 95-100, 102, 105, 107, 132, 187, 192; session, 100, 101, 176; suitable, 54, 96; Tecl.nical, 39, 55,56,
Tribal, 27, 29, 116, 163, 176, 177, 184, 188; area, 30, 86, 178, 186; Bhil, 9, 86, 170; community, 69, 160 180; economy, 190; farmer, 172, 173; solidarity, 171, 188; village, 174, 196
Tribe, 17, 29, 70, 172, 188

Underdevelopment, 102, 103, 105, 107, 108, 110, 111, 164, 188, 190

Variables, 55; active, 48; external, 52, 54, 62; passive, 48; strategy, 52, 53
Village, 7, 19, 24, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 58, 71, 76, 86, 87, 103, 119, 128-130, 135, 164; backward, 43, 162, 164; centre, 174, 176, 178, 194; community, 68, 117, 135, 141, 145, 165; instructor, 175, 177-179; leader, 137, 141, 146, 188, 189; structures, 57, 58, 187, 190; society, 68, 145, worker, 24, 172, 174, 193; *See Tribal*
Villager, 7, 84, 131, 134, 164, 165, 167, 168, 170, 188, 196
Voluntary, 35-37, 40, 50, 52-54, 61-64, 80; *See Agency, Organisation*

Weber, Max, 17
Women, 19, 30, 65, 70-72, 74, 75, 77, 79, 82, 86, 87, 128, 130, 133-135, 140, 143, 144, 156, 158, 174; education, of 173, 177; forum, 9, 73-75; illiterate, 6, 173, 177; leaders, 74, 141, 148; organisation of, 6, 73, 74, 127, 130, 150; poor, 65, 144; role of, 19; rural, 76, 177; scheduled caste, 9, 139, 142, 147, 149; self-employed, 74, status of, 69, 149, 201; workers, 78; working, 9, 73-75; young, 80

This book is concerned with participative research as an alternative that is relevant to the needs of the weaker sections of the people. Based on experiences and experiments in different parts of the country, this book presents a data-based perspective on participative research and evaluation as an integral tool in the process of liberation. The first part discusses the theoretical approaches to participative research and evaluation and suggests alternative ways of conceptualising its implementation. The second part presents a number of case studies which illustrate both the theory of participative research and the problems involved in actual situations. Because of this combination of theoretical reflection and actual experience, this book makes a significant contribution to the search for new models of research and evaluation that are relevant to the needs of a developing country.

This book will be invaluable to development workers, planners and trainers as well as administrators and scholars in the social sciences, who are looking for new development alternatives.

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